Compilation of Canine Draft/Carting Information.

BMDCA National Specialty 2005

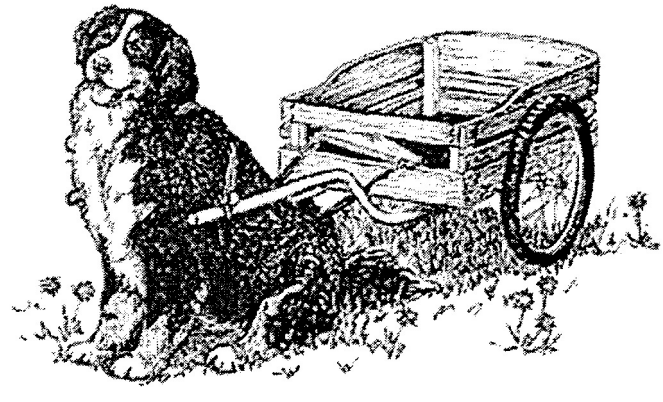
Draft Workshops

Draft Workshop I - Advanced Teams
May 9, 2005

Draft Workshop II - Beginner Teams
May 13, 2005

Draft Workshop Training Booklet

Presented by Nan and Jerry Pixton



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Foreword

Nan and I have used much of the material in this Training Booklet in the Draft Workshops that we have presented for the PVBMDC over the years.

We have also selected a cross-section of papers written by other experienced draft people to expose you to different viewpoints from across the Berner drafting community. Select the ideas that work for your team.

This Training Booklet is arranged in several sections: Overview, Dogs, Harnesses, Training, Drafting 101, Preparing for your First Draft Test, and Resources. Each section has a brief discussion of the topics along with related papers.

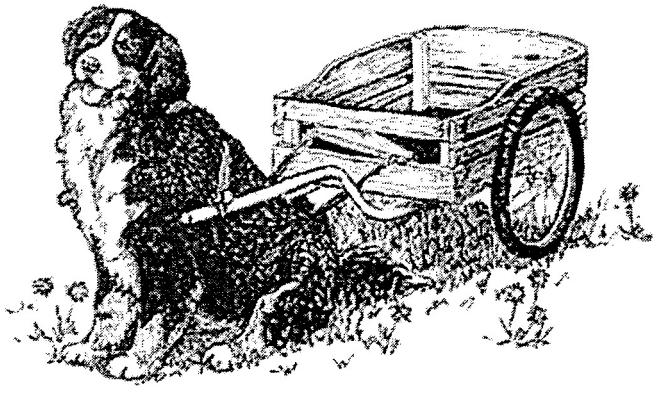
Our purpose is to help broaden your drafting experience, to make it an enjoyable activity for you and your Berner and to give you sufficient guidance to get off to a safe start as you learn. And motivation to continue.

We wish to thank the other contributors for kindly making their papers available to you.

We also wish to acknowledge all the instructors who have contributed their time and effort to help each of you advance in this sport of drafting. Without their help these workshops would not happen.

Nancy and Jerry Pixton
Co-Chairs 2005 BMDCA National Specialty Draft Workshops

Overview



BMDCA Info Series

Bernese Mountain Dogs And Draft Work

2002 #9

History ▶ Bernese Mountain Dogs were working dogs for generations in the Bernese Oberland of Switzerland. Traditionally, Bernese hauled dairy products, such as milk and cream, from the farms to the dairy, often accompanied by children and occasionally alone. As a working dog, the Bernese contributed significantly to the family's prosperity.

Draft in America ▶ The BMDCA approved Draft Test Regulations in January 1991 and the first Test was held in New England in the fall of that year. Since then, the sport of Draft in the Bernese community has grown tremendously, with many titles earned by enthusiastic teams. Many regional clubs across the country, including Alaska's, hold one or more Draft Tests a year and every BMDCA National Specialty since 1992 has offered Draft Tests. To both recognize and promote the Draft heritage of the Bernese Mountain Dog the BMDCA *Versatility Award*, established in 1995, requires a BMDCA Draft title as well as a championship and one other working title.

BMDCA Draft Tests ▶ The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Draft Tests are a series of exercises designed to develop and demonstrate the natural abilities of purebred Bernese Mountain Dogs in a working capacity involving hauling. Bernese have historically functioned as draft dogs in various capacities, and performance of these exercises is intended to demonstrate skills resulting from both inherent ability and training that are applicable to realistic work situations. Efficiency in accomplishing the tasks is essential. It is also desirable that the dogs evidence willingness and enjoyment of their work in a combination of controlled teamwork with their handlers and their own natural independence.

BMDCA Draft Tests are judged by two BMDCA approved Draft judges and entrants are evaluated on their performance of the exercises, teamwork, willingness, ability, enthusiasm, naturalness and smoothness. The handler is encouraged to talk to the dog during most portions of the test. Draft tests are divided into three parts.

Basic Control: This is not designed to be a precise obedience performance but a demonstration of basic responsiveness and control prior to hitching up. A simple obedience style heeling pattern including turns, changes of pace and halts must be executed successfully while maintaining an arm's length between dog and handler. A recall is also required in this part of the test.

Maneuvering: In a large (100 x 100) flat ring and with an empty cart/wagon, the team must negotiate a course that includes turns and circles around obstacles, successfully greeting strangers, loading and unloading its draft rig, and navigating a narrow area that is twelve inches wider than the widest part of the cart. The dog must back a distance of one foot in Novice Draft or four feet in Open Draft, successfully pass by audio and visual distractions, and wait while the handler moves an obstacle from their path.

Group Stay and Freight Haul: The three-minute group stay is performed in the ring while hitched to loaded carts. Novice Draft handlers remain in the ring and the Open Draft handlers go out-of-sight. Following the stay the teams leave the ring for a half-mile freight haul, which traverses the natural terrain of the area, ideally including uphill and downhill slopes and changes of terrain. Teams demonstrate their ability to pull and control the assigned weight over the course. The freight haul finishes back in the ring.

BMDCA Draft Titles ▶ Four draft titles can be earned through the BMDCA.

***Novice Draft Dog* (NDD):** All exercises, except the recall and stay, are performed on leash. The handler stands across the ring for the three-minute group stay. During the half-mile freight haul the dog pulls twenty pounds.

***Draft* Dog (DD):** All exercises are performed off leash. The handler is out of sight for the three-minute group stay. During the half-mile freight haul the dog pulls its own weight, rounded down to the nearest ten pounds (e.g., a 93 pound dog will pull 90 pounds).

***Brace Novice Draft* Dog (BNDD):** This class is for a team of two dogs working side by side and on leash. Each of the dogs must have already earned their NDD. The exercises are identical to those in Novice Draft and during the half-mile freight haul each team pulls forty pounds.

***Brace Draft* Dog (BDD):** This class is for a team of two dogs working side by side off leash. Each of the dogs must have already earned their BNDD and DD. The exercises are identical

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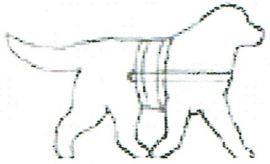
to those in Open Draft and during the half-mile freight haul each team pulls the combined weight the individual dogs would pull in Open Draft (e.g. a 96 pound dog teamed with an 83 pound dog will pull 170 pounds).

Getting Started ► The most important thing to keep in mind is to have fun. Whether you are interested in Draft titles, parades or having your Berner help you around the home, carting should be an experience you both enjoy. Start slowly and progress gradually, always keeping within your dog's zone of comfort. Take the time necessary for your dog to be happy and comfortable at each step of the training. As with all training, use lots of praise, food, rewards and positive reinforcement. Many Regional Bernese Clubs across the country sponsor Draft clinics, seminars and classes to help you get started.

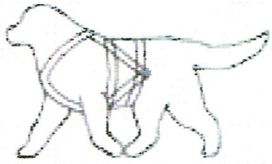
Basic Control: Draft work will be much easier to teach if you have established a basic working relationship and control with obedience training. Your Bernese should be able to walk on a loose leash, to stay, and to come when called off leash. Heelwork will be necessary if you plan to enter a Draft Test.

Safety: Safety is paramount when teaching your dog draft work because an out of control dog hitched to a cart is a hazard to himself and all around him. During the early stages of training always keep your dog on leash, and when first hitching your dog to a cart, work with a second person to help manage the situation if the dog should panic.

Harnesses: There are two basic styles of harness to choose from, buckle and siwash. The buckle harness is the traditional harness often seen in older pictures of Bernese carting in Switzerland. Its distinctive feature is a band that crosses the dog's chest horizontally across the sternum. The siwash harness is the style of harness used in dog sledding. A siwash harness allows complete freedom of movement of the dog's shoulder assembly that may be restricted by a buckle harness. Some dogs are more comfortable with one type of harness than another, so be flexible. Regardless of style, the harness should fit fairly snugly, without chafing. A properly fitted harness keeps your dog comfortable and safe.



Buckle



Siwash

Carts and Wagons: Two wheeled draft rigs are called carts and four wheeled are called wagons. A cart is easier to maneuver, especially in tight corners, but any load must be carefully balanced to avoid too much weight on the dog's shoulders. Wagons are usually larger and less maneuverable, having a wider turning radius, but since any load is fully supported by the four wheels, balance is not a concern. Wagons are more suited to pulling heavy weights. Your choice should be based on your needs. Some people find and adapt antique carts or wagons and some make their own, but they can also be purchased from a variety of sources.

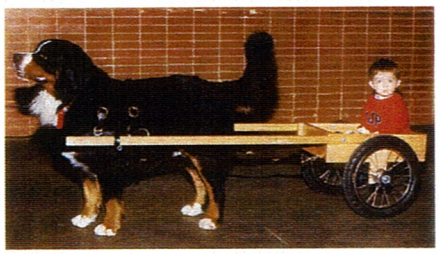
Training: Introduce the harness to your Berner first. Let the dog sniff it, then put it on him and let him wear it around the house and on walks until completely comfortable. Now add the traces and let your dog get used to them dragging. Then attach a light drag to the traces, such as a small piece of wood or partially sand filled milk jug. Remember, all this should be done on leash! Your Berner should be completely comfortable at each step before proceeding to the next. Solid shafts cause some dogs to feel very confined. Time, care and patience must be taken in introducing them.

Let your dog thoroughly investigate your new cart. Pull it around your yard while the dog follows along. Walk your dog on leash beside, behind and in front of the cart. Carts can make odd noises that the dogs need to become accustomed to. Some people even feed their dogs from the cart or beside the cart to create a very positive association.

The big day! Before actually hitching your dog to the cart, place him between the shafts and have him walk between them while you pull the cart. Only when your dog is comfortable at this step should you consider actually hitching him to the cart. When you do first hitch the dog have a person walk on each side for safety. Take just a few steps and praise, then a few more and praise. Increase distance slowly as your dog becomes more and more comfortable. When you can do long straight lines introduce big wide turns and only gradually tighten them. Your dog must become used to turning into the shafts and this can take time.

Maneuvers such as backing are best taught first without the cart and then with lots of help and praise with the cart.

Careful introduction, an upbeat attitude, lots of praise and lots of patience will reward you with a happy working partner eager to join a parade or give a child a ride. You will smile, your Berner will smile and so will that child in the cart!



Final Thoughts ► Although your Berner may not enter a Draft Test until he is two years old, even a little puppy may be introduced to a harness and dragging traces. Heavy loads, such as required for Open Draft, should not be introduced until a dog is fully mature, at least two years old. Load weight should always be increased very gradually over weeks of time. Your draft dog is an athlete and should be carefully conditioned. So, with safety always first, and your Berner and your patience in hand, enjoy exploring the draft heritage of your Bernese Mountain Dog.

Draft References ►

- Draft regulations, draft test schedules and draft judges are posted on the BMDCA website (www.bmd.org, soon to be www.bmdca.org).
- Newfoundland Draft Work (Consie Powel) – a wonderful book about draft work.
- Carts, harnesses and drafting supplies can be ordered from www.dogworks.com and www.nordkyn.com
- For information on training, workshops and matches, contact your regional BMD club. (The BMDCA website provides a list of clubs and contact information.) If you do not have a regional club near you, contact the BMDCA Draft Committee and we'll try to connect you with resources.

Carting with your Berners

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By Jim LaFrom

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For as long as domestic dogs have been associated with humans, they have worked in a partnership that has lasted through the ages. Within most breeding programs, breeders try to produce litters that are healthy and conform to the AKC standard. Beyond those basic requirements, we also look to produce dogs that can actually do the work they were originally intended to perform.

In the olden days of Switzerland, these dogs were used to pull butchers carts, haul milk down from the hillsides to the dairy and then wheels of cheese and milk to market. There is even anecdotal evidence of these beautiful dogs hitched to carts, delivering mail through the small towns without benefit of human company.

Tips on preparing for your first draft test

By doing draft work with our dogs we continue to preserve the working abilities of our dogs and prove to ourselves that our breeding programs are indeed producing **Working Dogs**. These dogs LOVE to work and they will look forward to having a job to do.

How can we use these dogs to work in the modern world?

- Your Berner can carry a small pack of his own food, and maybe some of your own personal items, while accompanying you in the backcountry.

- If you are allowed to bring dogs to your college classes, you can have the dog carry a small backpack with a couple of books in it. This can be a great asset if you have disabilities or maybe an accident has temporarily hampered your activities.

- A dog can pull a tarp attached to his pulling harness to transport yard clipping to the curb to be recycled.

About this site

- Collect firewood in rural areas.
- Berners can be used at the holidays or birthday parties to give small children rides in their cart.
- Participate in holiday parades.
- Participate in club-sponsored food drives, by going door-to-door with the dog and cart, to collect food for community outreach programs.
- Use the dog and cart in pet therapy programs.

This is just the start of what kind of teamwork you and your dogs can participate in.

If you are looking for a more structured format in which your performance can be judged, try competing in one of the many formal BMDCA-sponsored draft tests that are held around the U.S. Check our calendar of events for upcoming scheduled tests.

How do we get started?

I would first like to acknowledge the huge amount of experience that the Newfoundland community has contributed to the establishment and refinement of much of the equipment as well as many of the techniques that all dog owners use today in draft work. Their generosity in sharing their experiences allows us all to enjoy working safely and efficiently with our dogs.

Probably the easiest way to do this is to join **Sierra West BMDC** or a regional club near you and participate in upcoming clinics, or search out mentors in other breeds in your area that also participate in draft work.

These breeds include Newfoundlands, St. Bernards, Great Pyrenees, German Shepard Dogs, Rottweillers and some Australian Shepard clubs. Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute clubs are involved with sledding over snow but do train during the summer months on wheeled carts.

Secondly, the "bible" of draft work is a book called "Newfoundland Draft Work, A Guide For Training," second edition by Consie Powell (1987). This is available through 4M Dog Books, www.4mdogbooks.com.

Thirdly, there is a video available through Dog Works Inc.(a catalog of drafting and sledding equipment) www.dogworks.com that has a step-by-step introduction to draft work that also showcases its products at the same time.

Fourth, join the list serve called "Carting-l" for ongoing discussions of draft work and training. You can get your questions answered by some of the country's most experienced carting people. To subscribe, send an e-mail to Carting-l-subscribe@yahoogroups.com The Message and Subject can be left blank.

Equipment needs:

The following comments are based on my experiences with personal usage as well as helping other people adjust their own setups.

Styles of harnesses

Parade or 'Road' Harness: This is the one most commonly found in most pet stores for around $15. Although it can be modified to be used with wheeled vehicles, it doesn't come with the secondary set of 'stopper' D-ring attachments. The D-rings or some other form of them are what are attached to the shafts on either side of the dog, at the broadest point of the upper arm, to provide resistance when backing up or coming to a stop on a downhill situation. These can be easily added with a commercial sewing machine or HD rivet machine. This harness can be used for beginners in training situations or rigs that use a travois or drag sheet as their vehicle.

Carting Harness: This is the standard harness that you will see the majority of dogs using. It comes in both nylon and leather versions. It has the required backup d-ring's to facilitate control and normally comes with traces, which are the leads which attach the harness to the vehicle. It is easily put on and taken off the dog. These harnesses come in sizes which makes it important to get a proper fit. Improperly fit or adjusted harnesses make it uncomfortable on your dog as well as impede its best efforts at pulling your load.

Siwash Harness: The Siwash harness is a style of harness that is akin to putting a form-fitting glove on your dog that make of a series of sewn nylon webbing. When first taken out of the box, it might make you wonder which end is up or if there is an up at all. Once you see it on the dog, you quickly see the benefits of this harness. Again this style of harness is made in a range of sizes so its important to get the right size for your dog. The equipment manufacturers have charts to assist you in this. The cons of this harness are that it is complicated for the first timer to put on and in a competition circumstance can lead to improper installation on the dog. The pros are that the harness evenly distributes the load across the chest and shoulder areas without impeding the front reach of the dog. The dog can better control his load without it feeling sloppy.

Freighting style Siwash: The freighting style Siwash harness is slightly different from the previous one in that it is used to control loads usually associated with sleds. Tarps and drags or wheeled vehicles with **low** attachment points. The differences are subtle yet important. The angle with which the traces project from the harness to the object being pulled are critical and using the wrong style for the wrong application can lead to a harness that bunches up and doesn't evenly distribute loads across the entire nexus of webbing. Another feature of this harness is that it usually incorporates a wooden spreader bar.

Styles of carts or wagons

Competition Carts

Two-wheeled carts

Sulky carts

- **Four-wheeled wagons**
- **Radio Flyers**
- **Travois**

Training FAQ's

E-mail us with you questions and we'll add them to our list.

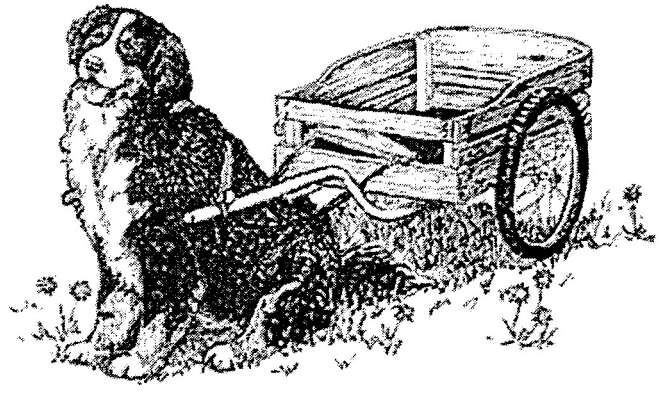
If you are interested in obtaining the current draft test regulations for Bernese Mountain Dogs, see http://www.bmdca.org/working/draft_regs.htm.

Several equipment suppliers may be found at the following websites:

- **Nordkyn Outfitters** www.nordkyn.com *Harnesses, sled dog equipment, skijoring, books*
- **Dog Works Inc.** www.dogworks.com *Complete source for carting equipment*
- **Wilczek Woodworks** www.geocities.com/wilczekwoodworks *Carts and Wagons and all the related accessories*
- **Ikon Outfitters** www.ikonoutfitters.com *Harnesses, sled dog equipment*
- **Chinook Wind Outfitters** www.chinookwind.com *Supplies and equipment you need to do nearly any activity with your dog*
- **Recreational Equipment Coop** www.rei.com *Dog packs, nylon webbing, accessories for custom harnesses*

For more related draft sites, see **www.cartingwithyourdog.com**.

Dogs



Dogs

Our Bernese Mountain Dogs come in all sizes and shapes. They may be tall or short, have a long back or be short coupled, they may be big boned or small boned and have various weights. We need to understand our particular dog and their age (e.g., how much growth is still expected) when we start selecting harnesses and carts to be used as we enter the sport of drafting. One size does not fit all! Ill-fitting equipment can lead to injury; at the very least it make the drafting experience an unpleasant one for your dog. Dogs vary in their tolerance to something being wrong while still continuing to work for you. Some will quit right away; others will keep on trying.

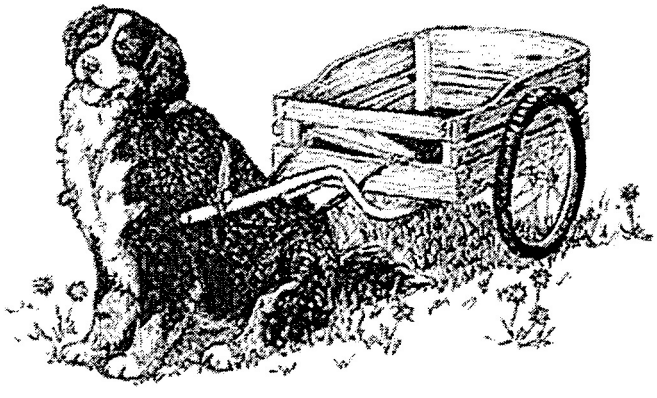
If you decide to buy a Siwash harness (see the next section for further discussion of harness types), one of the important measurements is the neck size of your dog. As your dog grows (from their first puppy harness to full maturity) you may need a size 22, then a 24, then a 26 and maybe even a size 28 harness.

To make this measurement, have your dog stand straight. Measure from the point where the neck meets the back (withers) around your dog's neck to the breastbone (sternum). Use a cloth tape measure and pull it tight. You want to measure your dog, not it's hair coat. Double check this measurement by either measuring the other side or measuring all the way around the neck (take half of this measure). When a harness of this size is placed over your dog's head, it just goes easily. If it is a very tight fit, you probably should be thinking about a larger size. If it is too loose, you are probably going to see your Forward Girth Strap riding too far back on your dog's back. When you buy a Siwash harness from a vendor, make sure it is returnable. They are not all made the same.

If you decide to buy a Buckle Harness, then the important measurements you want are your dog's circumference measurement around chest (girth) and its height.

Another measurement, for either harness, is the height of your dog at the withers. This will help your cart vendor to select wheel size and shaft type (straight or curved) to fit your dog. Also you want to know the length of your dog from chest to tail. This will help your cart vendor to adjust the shaft length so the cart is not hitting your dog.

Siwash or Buckle Harness?

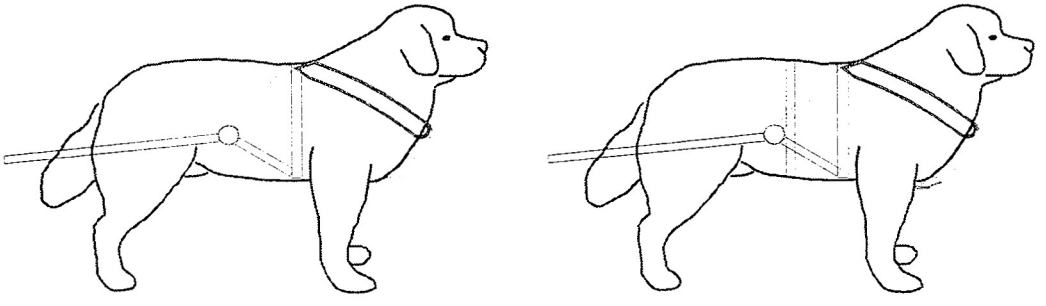


The Siwash Harness
By Jerry Pixton

The Siwash harness has been used for many years with sled dogs and comes in numerious configurations adapted to pulling sleds with several dogs and for weight pulling. This configuration has been streamlined for use in pulling a cart or wagon with a moderate load. The carting configurations are shown below; with and without the Rear Girth strap.

An advantage often stated for the Siwash harness is that it gives your dog freedom of movement for the shoulders and front legs. On the otherhand, it may seem complicated to put on.

The previous section on Dogs discussed how to measure your dog in order to get the proper size Siwash harness. In the next paper (Wilczek) discusses how to take your Siwash harness apart so that you can understand the purpose of each part. And how to put it on your dog for



In the paper on Drafting 101, I discuss some of the issues that arise with the Siwash harness and its proper adjustment in relationship with your particular dog and your particular cart. But let me repeat several points here.

The Girth Straps are often called "cinches" particularly if you are into horses.

The Quick Release type of Shaft Loop is probably a good idea as a safety feature when your are first learning this sport. But after your first few weeks, I think you will find that they allow too much movement of the shafts and you will want to remove them and make the Shaft Loops as part of the Front Girth using a Triglide buckle. This will provide a lot more stability to the shafts.

One important point that should be repeated here is that an adjustment is needed in **each** D Ring web strap. Most of the newer Siwash harnesses will come with a buckle in the upper D Ring web strap but none in the lower strap. Either get your vendor to modify the harness for you or take it to a harness repair shop and put an adjustable buckle in the lower strap so that you can balance the pull forces from the cart through the harness.

Remember to keep your traces equal lengths and adjusted so that the traces pull the cart, not the shafts.

After you have put your harness on many times, you will began to see that it really is easy and quick to put on. Here's what you do—

Gather the straps of your harness so the withers loop is at the top and the webbing is facing away from you and appears to be balanced (same number of straps on each side). Think of each side of the harness has forming a "slice of pie". That is, there is a curved piece at the front (the padded collar) and then two straight sides that come together in the D Ring. There is one of these "pie slices" for each side of the dog. Then just place the collar over your dogs head and rest the webbing back on the withers. You will have one end of the Forward Girth Strap on each side. You will also have one of the leg webbings on each side. Lift one of your dog's front feet and stick it through the webbing on that side. Then lift the other front foot and repeat. The ends of the Girth Strap can now be snapped together beneath the dog's belly. I like to keep my fingers inside the snap buckle so as not to include any belly hair in the buckle. Pull the D ring webbing under the Girth Strap if not already there. Now you can pull on the D rings on each side to check that the harness is fitting your dog properly. Run your hands down your dog's front legs. Make sure that you do not have a strap by your dog's front legs. Because if you do, you forgot to place a front leg through that strap.

When do you want to start using the Rear Girth Strap? You are not going to need or want it as you are learning. It is just one more thing to worry about as you are trying to harness and hitch your dog. As you start putting more weight in your cart or wagon you will want the Rear Girth Strap for stability of the harness. The Rear Girth helps to keep the harness from peeling off your dog when the weighted cart is pushing on a down hill. The D Rings will need to be in the proper horizontal position so that if you do decide to use the Rear Girth Strap it will fit your dog comfortably.

WILCZEK WOODWORKS
WAGONS - CARTS - TOYS - PUZZLES & MORE
DOG DRAFTING EQUIPMENT

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HOW TO PUT ON A SIWASH HARNESS (FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT WILCZEK WOODWORKS)

OK!! You open the plastic bag, take out the harness, and admire the nice color and good padding. Then it hits you. How the heck do you put this bunch of spaghetti on the dog? I will tell you that it does take practice. The easiest way to do this is to break down the harness into small parts.

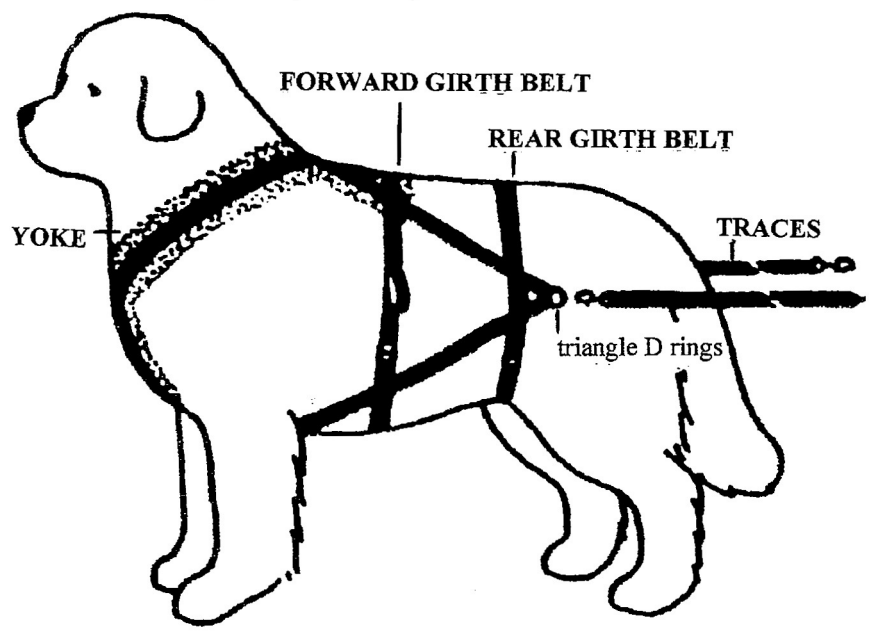
THE PARTS

TRACES – Two adjustable straps with brass clips at each end. They are what the dog uses to do the pulling. It is very important that they are the same length. Hold them up to each other to make sure that they are the same length and be sure to do this every time you adjust them.

REAR GIRTH BELT – One adjustable strap with a quick disconnect belt clip that goes around the lower belly of the dog. It has two purposes. It will keep the harness nice and neat, holding it against the sides of the dog, especially when the dog is not in shafts and traces. More importantly, when the dog is going down hill with heavy loads, it helps keep the harness from being pushed up and over the dog's head. The rear girth belt is not needed when you are first learning, having your dog pull light weights, or with an empty cart.

FORWARD GIRTH BELT – One Adjustable strap, with 2 quick release shaft loops, and a quick disconnect belt clip that goes around the upper belly of the dog behind his front legs. The shaft loops hold the cart or wagon shafts in the proper position on each side of the dog and will catch on the brakes of the shafts, preventing them from sliding too far forward and allowing the cart or wagon to hit the back of the dog.

YOKE – One padded collar that goes over the dog's head with straps that attach to D rings at the back of the rear triangles formed by the webbing. The dog's front legs go between the straps on each side of the yoke so that when one pulls backwards on the rear triangle D rings, even pressure is distributed on the padded part of the yoke.



HARNESSING

Take all the parts off of the yoke and identify each one as listed above. Take the yoke and hold it so that the D ring that is attached to the padded part is at the bottom. Separate the straps going to the rear triangle D rings so that a triangle is formed on each side of the yoke. With a unique command such as HEAD or HARNESS put the yoke over your dog's head so that the D ring on the padding is over the dog's breast bone. A dog treat held through the yoke opening and in front of his nose will encourage your dog to put his head through the yoke. PRAISE your dog often and well when they let you put the yoke over their heads. Re-adjust the dog's collar and leash so that they do not interfere with the yoke. Next, with another unique command such as FOOT or LEG, gentle lift one foot and put it through the triangle formed by the straps attached to the yoke and ending at a D ring. Then repeat with the other foot.

At this point the yoke should be lying smoothly around your dog's neck, below the collar, and the straps should be lying smoothly against the sides of the dogs, with no twists, and if you pull gently towards the back of the dog on the D rings at the ends of the triangle shaped straps, even pressure should be distributed throughout the padding of the yoke.

Eventually the D rings will be used to attach the dog to a singletree by the traces. The singletree will eventually be attached to a cart or wagon and keep the traces from pinching the back end of the dog and absorb shocks caused by the natural gait and side to side movement of the dog. Therefore, it is very important that the yoke and triangle straps on each side of the dog be smooth with no twists and exert even pressure on the dog.

Next, take the forward girth belt and feed it through the loop at the top of the yoke which is sitting on the dog's withers (point where the neck meets the back and also where the points of the shoulder blades can be felt). Pull the forward girth belt through the loop at the top of the yoke until a quick release shaft loop is on either side of the dog and then buckle the girth under the dog's belly being very careful not to catch any hair in the quick release buckle. You have to lean over the dog and reach around either side of the dog's rib cage to buckle the girth so take the opportunity to give your dog a hug and encouraging word. The girth length should be adjusted so that the girth is snug if you pass your hand between it and the dog. The two shaft loops should be hanging evenly on each side of the dog about 1/3 of the way down between the withers and bottom of the rib cage. Remember these loops will eventually hold the shafts that should be at the height of the forward point of the shoulder blades.

We recommend that the girth belt be put on the outside or over the rear triangle straps that go between the yoke and the D rings. Some handlers prefer going over the first strap and under the lower second one. Experiment and see which method allows all the straps to .e smoothly once backwards pressure is applied to the D rings.

The shaft loops are adjustable and should fit loosely over the ends of the shafts of the cart or wagon, but not so loosely that they slide over the eyelet brakes of the shafts.

The forward girth belt is extra long on purpose. Later on, you may decide to remove the quick release shaft loop buckles. The sections of the girth belt that go through the quick release shaft loop buckles can be extended so that they form their own loops which then become the shaft loops if you remove the buckles. This eliminates the slop or play of the loops which becomes an issue when the dog starts pulling heavy weights or works on hilly terrain. The advantage of the quick release shaft loops is that one can get their dogs out of the cart or wagon very quickly in an emergency and if the loops are left on the shafts, it is easier to harness one's dog to the cart or wagon. Eventually you will want to cut off, with a very sharp knife or razor blade, the extra webbing and melt the ends with a match or lighter to prevent unraveling. In the meantime, use rubber bands to hold the excess from dragging on the ground or bothering the dog.

The rear girth belt does not have to be used when pulling light loads or just beginning but it does keep the harness neater and the rear triangle D rings close to the dog's body. The belt slips through pockets in the webbing right in front of the D rings. Be sure not to catch your dog's hair in the quick release buckle. The strap length should be adjusted so that the palm of your hand can slip underneath it when it is buckled. Excess strapping can be cut off.

The last pieces of the harness are the traces. The correct length is critical for the safety of your dog. When attached to the rear triangle D rings and the singletree, they should hold the singletree away from the cart or wagon permitting it to "float" and move as the dog pulls against it. The length should permit the shaft loops to slide no more than an inch forward of the brakes on the shafts when the dog is pulling. If they are way too long, the shaft loops will come off the ends of the shafts when the dog pulls. If the cart or wagon pushes forward after the dog stops, or when going downhill, with a strong jerk caused by the shaft loops sliding and then catching on the brakes, they are still too long. If things are stretched tightly between the shaft loops pulling on the brakes and the traces pulling on the singletree, they are too short. Remember to remove the traces to adjust them and always check to see that they are the same length before re-connecting them. Finally, make sure that the buckles of the traces are not positioned so that the dog's rear legs are hitting them. After harnessing, double check all the straps to ensure that nothing is twisted and that everything is lying flat and neatly against your dog. Step back and look at it. Is your dog comfortable? Are you sure that all the buckles are secure without pulling on any hair? Are any straps on top of any of the buckles in such a way as to cause them to rub against the dog?

Good Luck and have Fun! **Barbie and Bill**

THE CARTING/BUCKLE HARNESS

By Steve Dudley

The harness is probably the single most important component of draft equipment you'll own and use. The choice of type harness and its fit is of vital importance for the safety and comfort for your dog. Too tight, your dog will experience limits in range of motion and be uncomfortable and/or distracted; too loose, the harness can shift on the dogs body and create safety issues. Ideally adjusted, you should be able to snuggly fit your flattened hand between the harness and the dogs body.

Contrary to stated beliefs and opinion, the carting harness, or buckle harness, is perfectly acceptable (in fact desirable from my point of view) for orthopedically sound dogs for the short 20 minute or so durations the dog is asked to work in draft test situations (or even for use around most residential type situations). The term "efficiency" is rendered practically meaningless in such short temporal spans. A good quality carting harness is durable, quite functional and simplicity itself in application.

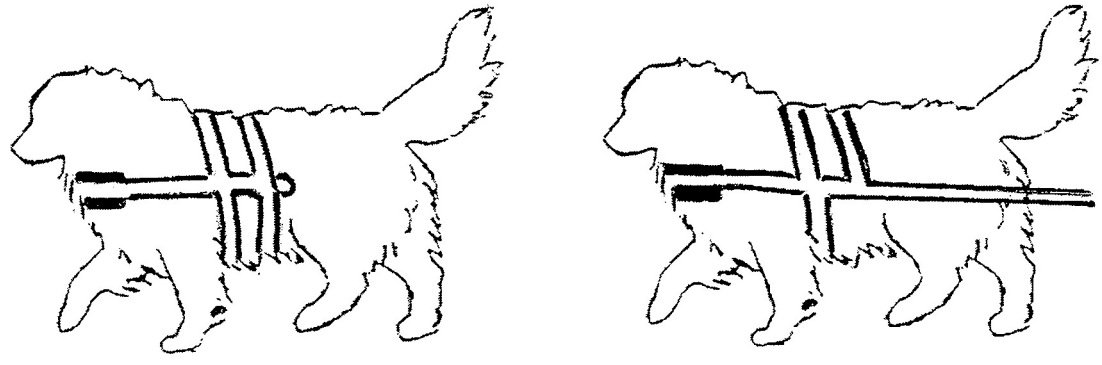


Figure 1

The carting harness is typified by a cross-chest strap that is usually of wide girth and padded, tied to an assemblage of straps that situate to harness on the back and a belly strap for securing the harness on the dog. Multiple buckles and/or tri-glides may be present for adjusting the harness for a proper fit. (Fig. 1). Note, the carting harness is NOT the same thing as a tracking harness, though they look similar.

Most carting harnesses are made of nylon webbing (generally 1 inch or wider) or leather. You should consider the advantages or disadvantages of each material before making a purchase. Priority considerations should include the quality of construction, quality of materials used in the harness, the type material best suited to your areas environmental conditions and the amount of work you wish to put into maintenance versus the price, color, or trend.

Though Bernese are classified in the large/giant breed category, when it comes to purchasing a harness most mature Bernese actually take a small to medium size harness. When making a harness purchase you should be prepared to deal with a manufacturer that is willing to work with you to insure you get a harness of proper fit. When ordering you should know your dogs' age, weight, its circumference measurements around the chest, and its height. This will help insure you get the right personal fit for your dog. Be very cautious about buying any harness without being able to actually try it on your dog or without interacting with the manufacturer relative to discussing your dogs proportions.

Remember it's not desirable, or necessarily safe, to expose a young growing dog to pulling weight. Bone and joint orthopedics on large breed dogs take a long time to come together properly. This is why the BMDCA forbids dogs younger than 2 years of age from draft test entry. However, you should prepare for drafting by training for a proper work ethic, proper communicative skills and teaching the dog preliminary non weight bearing exercises leading into draft work and utilize a harness the dog can practice in without weights. Again proper harness fit is vital for safety, even here, and be aware that young Berners have a lot of growing to do. It may necessitate having multiple harnesses to accommodate such a scenario....a small size to practice non weight bearing exercises for young dogs and a medium size for when the dog matures to do draft work. Proper fit to accommodate the growth stage of the time is important.

Every harness should be closely inspected before putting it on your dog. Check all stress points, seams and joints for integrity. You should be looking for weakened or failing stitching or excessive wear. Check for cracking, dry rot or excessive stretch from being wet and improper maintenance in leather harness. Frayed and broken stitching can cause distraction and discomfort for a dog and failure of stitching or harness webbing itself can be a significant safety issue. You should not use such damaged harness with your dog for safety sake.

Check the harness also for twisted straps and straighten as necessary. The cross-chest strap should be inspected for burrs or other obstructions that could create discomfort for the dog. The chest strap is what the dog pushes against to move and maneuver loads in this style harness. Traces attached to harness rings on the lateral sides of each harness (not the shaft loops/receivers) are what transmit the working energy of a dog into its harness to the load. Check buckles and clasps for functionality and integrity (Fig. 2).

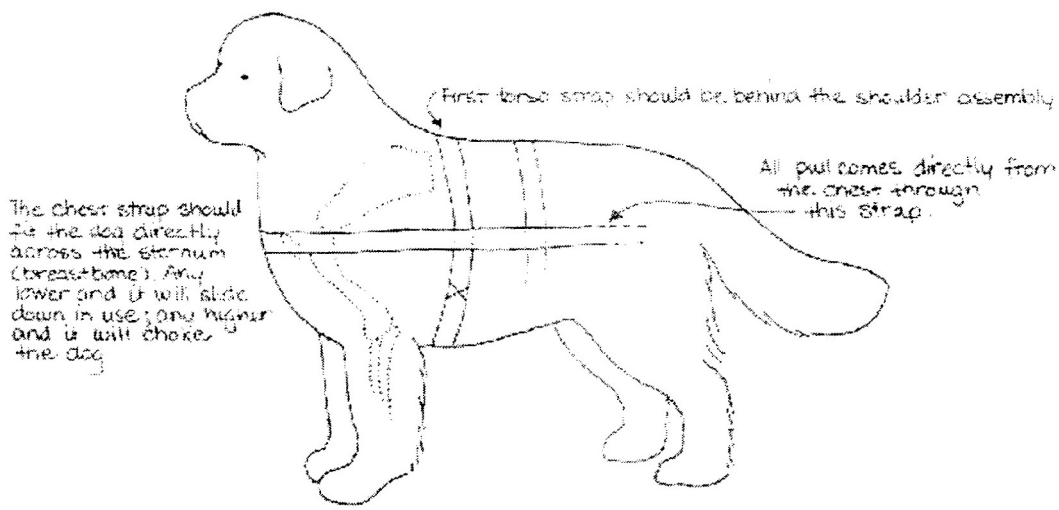

First torso strap should be behind the shoulder assembly
All pull comes directly from the chest through this strap.
The chest strap should lie the dog directly across the sternum (breastbone). Any lower and it will slide down in use; any higher and it will choke the dog

Figure 2

If the shaft receiver loops on the side of the harness are adjustable, they should be cinched down to allow the cart shafts to glide smoothly into them yet not allow excessive sloppy motion of the shafts when the cart/wagon is moving. Improper construction of shaft receiving loops are a great discomfort to the dog and can be dangerous. Ideal loop size is 1 to 1.5 inches in diameter and sewn so as to closely adhere to the harness side. Some harnesses do not even come with shaft loops, necessitating the handler jury-rig something. These are unsafe in my opinion and not worth good money.

With the dog in a standing or sitting position place the harness over his/her head such that the cross-chest strap comes to rest across the front of the chest and the back strap joining the cross-chest assembly to the belly strap rests longitudinally on the back beginning around the rear dorsal proximity of the scapula (Fig. 3), that is the dog is wearing the harness around the neck at this juncture. Place the dog in a standing position and reach around and under the dog and buckle/hitch the belly strap(s) into place. Once this is done the buckles located on the side straps and belly strap can be adjusted to achieve proper fit and snugness (Figure 4). These should be initially set by adjusting the slip anchoring for the buckle to achieve a reasonably close fit. Then choose a hole in the buckle strap to achieve desired snugness. Be careful not to suck the dogs hair into the buckle. This should be done for each harness strap that has a buckle or adjustment mechanism, front to back. Ideally, and on a mature dog, the adjustment of buckles, tri-glides and cinch anchors for buckles should be accomplished well before hand and remain somewhat stable. Nevertheless, you should Understand and be comfortable/practiced enough to make spot changes as necessary to insure the proper fit of a harness for your dogs safety sake. Environmental conditions can often necessitate fit adjustments. If the buckle/clasp adjustments are pre-set it should take 30 to 60 seconds to put this type harness on. This is a big plus if entered in a draft test and #1) you're nervous and #2) it's a hot day, the faster the dog is harnessed and hitched and out on the course the less time you both have to spend in a distracting situation.

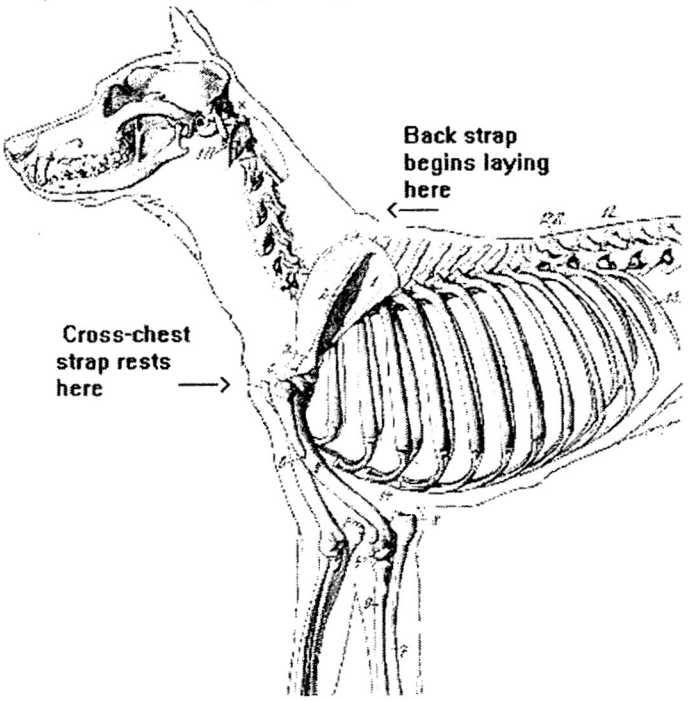


Figure 3

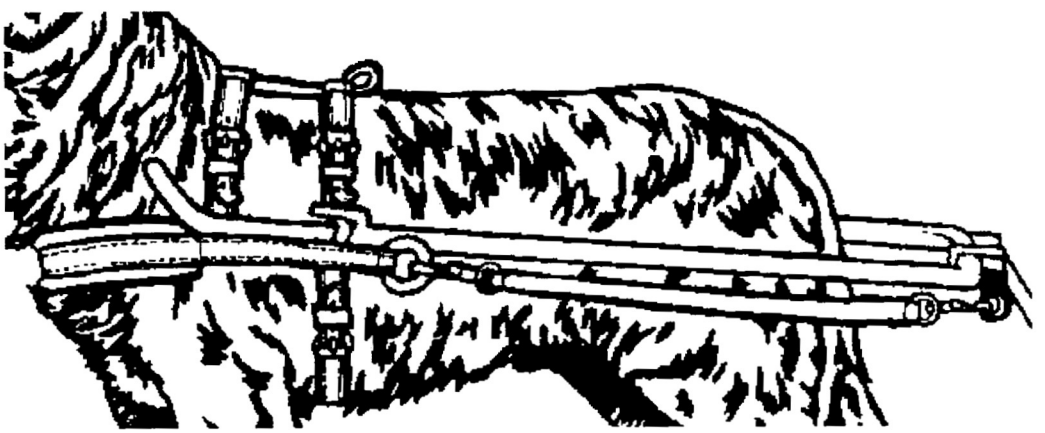
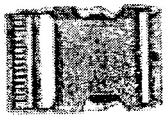
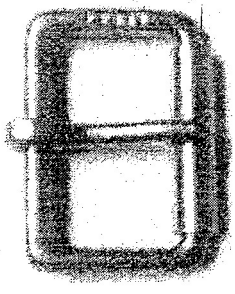


Figure 4

Hardware Glossary:



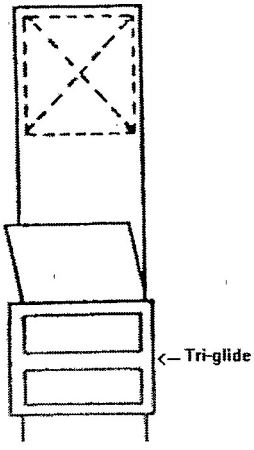
Side Release Buckle



Buckle

D-ring

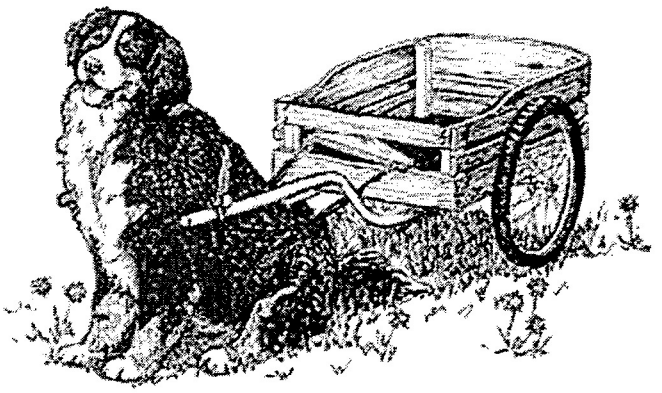
Loop Lock



Tri-glide

Acknowledgements:
1. Figure 4 copyright and used with kind permission by Ikon Outfitters (www.ikonoutfitters.com)

Training



Training

In this section, Nan and I present the structured training outline that has been used successfully in the various Drafting Workshops that we have presented. We start with things that you can be doing with your puppy even before you get your first harness or cart. Remember that you have the first two years of your puppy's life that is useful for training before your dog has fully matured such that the bones will withstand pulling any weight. Even then weight conditioning is a serious matter so as not to damage your dog!

We follow a structured approach, broken into small steps, that progressively increases your dog's and your capability at drafting (remember you are a Team). Most often you can progress through a series of these steps fairly quickly. But occasionally you will hit a step that your dog has difficulty with. Our dogs vary greatly in temperament. Even when you think you know your dog, you might be surprised at some step where you dog is uncomfortable, skittish or becomes scared. As with other types of training, once you have scared your dog, it takes a lot of remediation to undo the damage done. So we take small steps that, if ok, can be quickly moved past but when not ok will not cause so much harm as to require a long time to get over the experience. As we have watched well over 100 dogs in our workshops you never know which step will present a problem to a particular dog until they go through the sequence.

The following section on Drafting 101 will help you get the proper equipment and get it adjusted properly. Then the section on Preparing for your First Draft Test will aid you in becoming more proficient as you get your team ready for your first Draft Test.

Introduction to Drafting

Training as a puppy

0. Know your dog – they must be willing to work and be happy. So lots of fun, short activities.
    a. Know how to get their tail wagging. Lots of Positive Reinforcement – clicks, praise, food.
    b. If your dog is timid then go SLOW. It takes a lot longer to "untrain" a bad experience then it does to avoid it in the first place.
    c. If your dog is confident make sure you stay in control
1. Take the puppy over as many different surfaces as you can find.
2. Get your puppy used to something behind them. Let them drag a lead around so they get used to leads touching legs and body. Let the flexie lead touch their legs, etc.
3. Put a second lead on the other side to drag (watch that the leads do not get caught in anything).
4. We often walk our dogs on flexi-leads. Usually we try to keep the lead from becoming tangled. But for Draft training it is good to let the lead touch the body and rear legs, even wrapping around the legs. Do this in a safe manner so your dog gets the idea of something back there touching them.
5. Get control first. Some Basic Obedience training is essential but also work your puppy on right side and behind as well as "obedience" left. Always start on-lead. But also try to work off-lead as soon as your puppy is ready.
6. Get or make some basic agility objects (Caviletti poles, narrow plank 6 to 12 inches off ground, ladder laid on ground). These are fun and teach your dog where its legs are and how to approach different obstacles with confidence.
7. Put a tracking harness on them (strap under belly) at various stages of growth. Tracking harnesses usually have lots of adjustable straps to accommodate your dogs growth.
8. Introduce the puppy to noisy objects (motors, dish washer, trash compactor, vacuum cleaner, tractor, air compressor, etc.
9. Drag sticks and branches beside and behind them. You can train in the house with a broom, mop handle, etc. Often you can have your dog get treats by standing next to a counter and having your dog approach for the treat while holding a pole in the other. If you are using clicker training, have an assistant click at this point.
10. Hook plastic gallon water bottles to the leads and drag behind. But do not increase the weight until your dogs leg bones have fully grown at about 2 years of age.
11. If you can teach them to side step that would be very useful later.
12. Train your puppy to back up from early on. Make this a daily fun activity. You don't want the dog learning to back when a cart is also behind. Even if your dog knows how to back, putting a cart there makes this a new behavior to them.
13. Teach your puppy to target to your hands. This can be used to help move them into position for the cart or to lead them through a difficult obstacle.
14. Make lots of right and left turns with frequent halts and slows.
15. Begin to establish the set of commands you are going to use with your dog later. Use whatever words make sense to you. Just be consistent. Always use the same command. You will need commands for moving forward, backwards, stop, slow, fast, standing still, turning, calming your dog and maybe one to pep them up.
16. Never miss an opportunity to expose your puppy to new things in a safe manner. If you happen to have a cart or wagon around, let your puppy sit in it or get some treats in the cart.

At 18 to 20 months

0. Know what you want to do before buying much equipment
    a. Competition – a competition style cart is easy to maneuver and back up.
    b. Work – will need a functional wagon, and siwash style harness for heavy loads
    c. Parades – may want a custom designed or decorative cart/wagon.
    d. Simple over-the-head type harness works for basic carting, novice competition, parades, pups. Adjustable straps help with growing dogs. Siwash style harness is most efficient for pulling as it allows freedom of the front legs. It seems a bit confusing to put on at the start but once you understand the harness, it is easy (over the head, two front legs thru, buckle it up). As Siwash harnesses come in sizes, you will probably need several harnesses as your dog grows.
1. Fit a Harness to your dog
2. Walking on Lead with Harness, do some obedience work
3. Walk on lead with Harness and traces
4. Introduce dog to sled with food
5. Drag sled behind with traces. Sled will make different noises on different surfaces. Stay in control.
6. When dog can turn circles, and stop on various surfaces then
7. Drag piece of PVC pipe beside dog, hold it in one hand while leading dog with other
8. Have some one hold PVC pipe on other side while dragging the sled
9. Introduce dog to training wheels with food
10. Have some one pull training wheels beside dog while you lead and dog drags sled
11. Without sled have someone drag training wheels behind dog
12. When steady, gradually bring shafts up over dog
13. When steady, rest shaft in shaft loop
14. When steady, put shafts in shaft loops and connect traces
15. Go straight until dog is steady, then wide turns in both directions.
16. Over several sessions make turns smaller.
17. Introduce dog to cart with food. Have dog walk between shafts to get food in cart
18. Have some one drag cart beside dog until steady
19. Finally hitch dog to cart. Let dog feel weight of shafts on shoulders. Do not hook up traces at first – just pull the cart with the cinch loops. When dog is steady, then hook up traces.
20. Work on halts
21. Work on sitting between shafts. Note: If your dog prefers to stand between the shafts, this is OK as long as the dog will remain still and a stand is required in some tests.
22. This is the stage where you want to learn your dogs particular stress signals. These signals take many forms but your dog usually displays a consistent signal. They make just stop moving. They may "blow you off" looking everywhere except at you. Their gait may change. When you see these stress signals fix the problem. This may be a quick fix (correcting a strap or removing a snow ball). Or it may be that you dogs leg is hurting and you need to stop the activity for the day. Or go do some fun thing with your dog.

Getting Ready for your first Test

0 This stage is lots of repetitious practice to develop teamwork and fine tune your performance. Work off-lead occasionally as you and your dog begin to work together better so you are not so dependant on the leash for control.

1 Continue with your Basic Control practice with a reliable Recall.

2 Work on Harness and Hitch. Find the position that you can leave your dog in while you get the harness (and later the cart). Be comfortable with putting on the harness correctly. Find how your dog wants to move into alignment with the cart. Targetting to your hands in useful here. Some find it easier to walk their dogs around the cart and into position.

3 Learn to work on all sides of your dogs as you practice going around turns. Make quarter turns, half turns, three quarter turns, full turns and even more both to the right and to the left. You will often find your dog makes a turn on one direction easier than the other. Work more on the difficult side.

4 Practice going through narrow places, gradually decreasing the clearance as you and your dog gain confidence. Figure out if you want to lead your dog through or some dogs work better if you follow them through the narrows. Learn how to align your dog in the approach to the narrows and how many steps they take to halt.

5 Practice halts to load and unload your cart. Find the steady position (stand, sit or down) for your dog when the steward approaches to "pet" your dog.

6 Practice aligning and halting your dog for a moveable obstacle both before and after (e.g., to close a gate) the obstacle.

7 Practice weaves so that you and your dog can move through spacings just longer than your cart. Learn where your cart wheels are going to go so you can help your dog by clearing the obstacle. Side stepping is often usefully here if you have trained your dog to side step.

8 Practice backing your dog in a relative straight manner. This is often hard for a dog, even when they back without the cart very well.

9 Remember to develop a "slow" with your dog. This is necessary to maintain control on hills

10 Practice keeping that leash loose, with a "J" in it

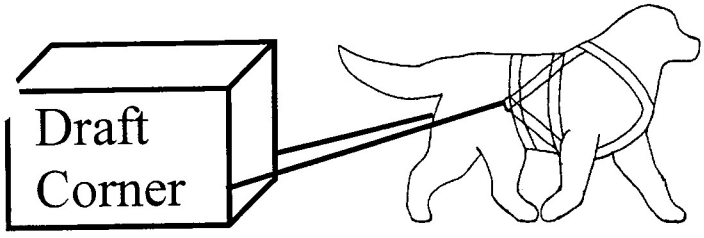
11 Work on endurance training with your dog. Go on long walks just on lead. Take the cart on long walks several times a week, adding 5 lbs of weight each week. Work up to the distance and weigh needed for your test and then some. Barbell weights are a convenient weight device, coming in different sizes (5 lbs, 10 lbs, 25 lbs, etc) so you can stack up whatever weight you are training at. Sometimes reduce the weight and increase the distance on a walk.

12 Work on long stays with the cart with its final weights. Again find the position that the dog is steady in (if position is an option for your test)

13 Practice, Practice, Practice. Find a workshop or match to enter. Attend Draft Tests just to see the process.

Introduction to Draft Work (Class Check List)

- ❑ Fit a Harness on your dog
- ❑ Walk on Lead with Harness, do some obedience work
- ❑ Walk on lead with Harness and traces
- ❑ Walk with wood spacer fastened to traces
- ❑ Introduce dog to sled with food
- ❑ Drag sled behind with traces
- ❑ Turn dog in wide circles, and stop on various surfaces (causes different noises)
- ❑ Drag piece of PVC pipe beside dog, hold it in one hand while leading dog with other
- ❑ Have some one hold PVC pipe on other side while dragging
- ❑ Introduce dog to training wheels with food
- ❑ Have some one pull training wheels beside dog while you lead and dog drags sled
- ❑ Without sled have someone drag training wheels behind dog
- ❑ When steady, gradually bring shafts up over dog
- ❑ When steady, rest shaft in shaft loop
- ❑ When steady, put shafts in shaft loops and connect traces
- ❑ Go straight until dog is steady, then wide turns in both directions.
- ❑ Over several sessions make turns smaller.
- ❑ Introduce dog to cart with food
- ❑ Have some one drag cart beside dog until steady
- ❑ Finally hitch dog to cart
- ❑ Go straight until dog is steady, then wide turns in both directions.
- ❑ Work on halts until dog gets used to sitting between shafts
- ❑ Practice, Practice, Practice



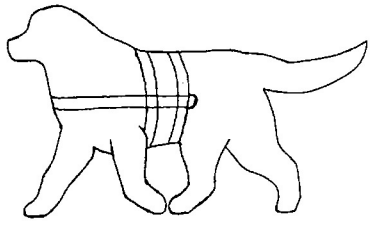
by Alison Jaskiewicz

Getting Started: Equipment

Harnesses

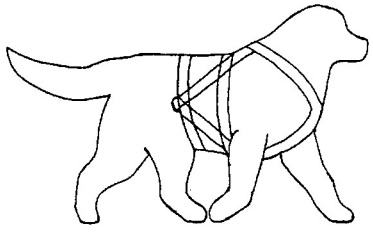
There are two basic types of harness available for draft work - the buckle harness and the siwash harness.

The buckle harness is the traditional style of harness seen in most old pictures of Berners carting in Switzerland and is still in frequent use today. (The Berners featured in the December **AKC Gazette** article reprinted in the January **Bernerblatt** wear this type of harness.) The distinctive characteristic of the buckle harness is the band which crosses the chest horizontally across the dog's sternum. This chest band extends around the sides of the dog across his shoulders and connects to the belly band(s).



Buckle Harness

The siwash harness is the style of harness used in dog sledding. It is characterized by two bands which form a collar which sits low on the dog's neck. On the dog's chest the bands from either side of the neck connect at the dog's sternum and pass backwards between the dog's front legs, where they divide again and proceed diagonally up and back across the dog's rib cage. On the dog's withers the two sides of the collar cross and pass diagonally down across the dog's rib cage to meet the chest bands. Belly bands may be added. The distinctive characteristic of the siwash harness is that it allows complete freedom of movement of the dog's shoulder assembly.



Siwash Harness

Some dogs are more comfortable with one type of harness than another. Make your choice, but be willing to try another if your dog is uncomfortable.

Any harness which will be used for downhill terrain must be equipped with a belly band immediately behind the dog's front legs which enables the dog to control the weight of the cart pushing from behind. (This also requires solid shafts with stops.)

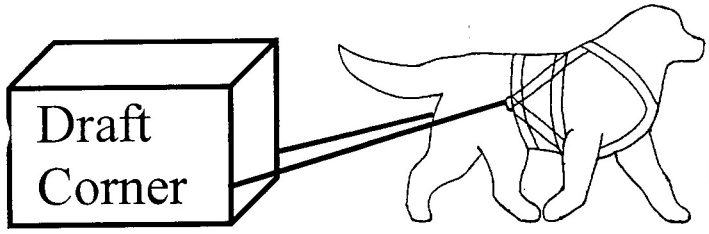
For a more complete discussion of the harness types I recommend the publication **Newfoundland Draft Work: A Guide for Training** by Consie Powell, available through Berner Paws 'n' Shop (BMDCNV Ways and Means) for $18 (plus $3 shipping). This book contains a wealth of equipment and training information.

Draft Equipment Suppliers:

Dog Works	Ikon Outfitters
317 Curvin Drive	7597 Latham Road
Stewartstown, PA 17363	Lodi, WI 53555-9526
1-800-787-2788	608-592-4397
Fax 1-717-993-3698	

Next month: Carts, wagons, sleds, travois, etc.

Draft Corner *invites questions and discussion.*



by Alison Jaskiewicz

Getting Started: Equipment

Carts, Wagons, etc.

Carts and wagons are the most common types of draft apparatus and will be the subject of this column. They can be used on any firm ground. Most of the other possible apparatus are for use on snow - sleds (with runners), toboggans (with a flat sliding surface) and travois (which can be used without snow also).

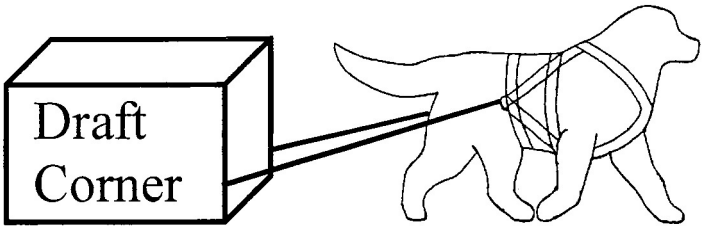
A cart has two wheels and is therefore easier to maneuver, both forwards and backwards. A cart can actually be pivoted in place. With just two wheels any load placed in a cart must be very carefully balanced. (Balancing loads will be the subject of a future column.) If the weight is too far forward much of the weight is carried on the dog's shoulders. If the weight is too far back the shafts will rise upward and in an extreme case could actually lift the dog's forequarters off the ground. Neither of these scenarios is good for the dog. The maneuverability of carts, as well as their often small, compact and lightweight size, has made them the popular first choice for use in draft tests.

Wagons have four wheels and are therefore very stable and have a wider turning radius than a cart. They have a tendency to fishtail during backing which can be controlled by the use of a locking pin to prevent the turning of the front axle. (The axle must be freed after backing or the wagon will not turn.) Freight loads do not need to be carefully balanced as the weight is supported fully by the four wheels and only the weight of the shafts rests on the dog's shoulders. Wagons tend to be larger and heavier and are more suited to heavy weight pulling. Wagons are particularly preferred for giving children rides as you don't need to worry about the child shifting position during the ride and changing the balance. While not as maneuverable as a cart, a wagon is still a reasonable choice for a draft test - maneuvering courses always allow plenty of space for the larger turning radius of wagons.

Take the time to think about what you will be using your draft apparatus for and which type will be most practical for you and your dog. And, if you should be bitten by the "draft bug" you may find yourself with one of each type!

Next month: Introducing your dog to harness & cart

Draft Corner *invites questions and discussion.*



by Alison Jaskiewicz

Dog Meets Harness & Cart

The key words when introducing your Berner to anything new are "Take your time." Never assume that your dog's past reactions to new experiences will hold true. The Berner who has taken everything in life so far in stride may decide his brand new harness looks like a tangled snake or that his new cart is a noisy clattering invader. Or your previously timid Berner may swell with pride at the sight of his new carting equipment.

You are the best judge of your Berner's reactions. If he's not sure, give him time to work out his concerns as you pair the new equipment with pleasant experiences such as food and play.

Set your new harness out on the floor and invite your Berner to investigate it. Praise and reward his interest. Most likely he'll think it's a new leash tied in a knot - pretty mundane. Now pick the harness up and let him hear that the various clasps and D-rings rattle together a little - again rather like a leash and/or collar. When he decides the harness must be very special because he always gets liver or cheese when it's around, plus Mom and Dad seem to think it's special too, then slip it over his head, secure the buckles and have a play session or go for a walk. Again, he's allowed to sniff and investigate, but at no time in this process should he be allowed to mouth or chew the harness. Quietly tell him "no" and distract him with toys or food.

Your cart should be stationary when your Berner first meets it. Let him investigate this new piece of "furniture" which has appeared in your yard. Next move the cart a little and gradually pull the cart around the yard while he watches. Now, have someone else pull the cart while you and your Berner walk on leash nearby. Let him walk in front of, behind and on both sides of the cart.

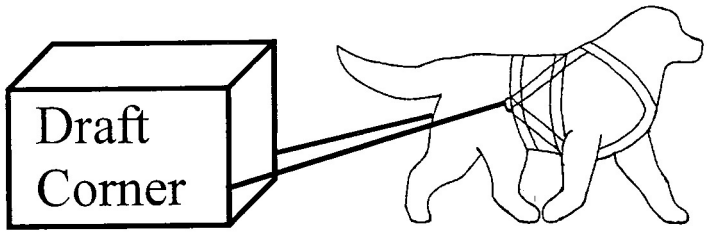
Now, place your dog in a sit stay and slowly move the cart so the shafts are on either side of his shoulders. If he is accepting of this procedure then move the shafts slowly up and down and gently bump them into his shoulders. Take your time! If your Berner is particularly worried about the shafts take the cart completely out of the picture and work with a couple of three or four foot sticks simulating shafts until he is comfortable.

These procedures may take several weeks or only several minutes. You must read your own dog's comfort levels and degree of confidence. All three of my Berners have accepted the harness without problem. *Kibo* was pulling his wagon the first day he was introduced to it. *Shira* took a full week to accept just the shafts by her sides, and we were practicing three times a day!

Accept your Berner's individuality, work patiently to reach his comfort level and you are well on your way to a confident, happy, tail wagging draft dog.

Next month: The big moment - hitching your dog.

Draft Corner *invites questions and discussion.*



by Alison Jaskiewicz

Starting to Pull

Your Berner is now completely comfortable wearing his/her harness and confident when walking near a moving cart. He is unconcerned by the feeling of shafts by his sides and shoulders.

Now, attach the traces to a piece of wood or plastic jug partially filled with water and let your Berner get the feel of pulling a little weight behind him. Show him what he will be pulling first so his curiosity doesn't have him bent in half to see what's behind him. Lots of praise for your budding draft dog!

The next step is to stand your on leash dog between the shafts of your cart and walk him while someone else pulls the cart. Let the shafts bump his sides a little bit and encourage him and tell him what a clever Berner he is. Don't forget an occasional treat as well. The cart should be moved in either a straight line or a very large circle. Do this until your Berner is comfortable being in such close confined proximity to a moving cart.

Now the big moment has come! You must have at least two people, one on each side of the dog. This is very important. If your dog should begin to panic you must be able to immediately control both the dog and cart. If your dog should become scared while hitched to the cart, his natural reaction will be to run away from it - but, he is attached and cannot get away. Imagine how terrifying this could be and be prepared to immediately stop the cart and calm the dog.

Now, again stand your on leash Berner between the shafts and connect the traces and shafts to his harness. Let him get used to the feel and praise and reward him. Very slowly start moving forward and as his comfort level grows increase your pace to a comfortable walk. Wow! Tell your Berner what a wonderful draft dog he is! Be sure to have a person on each side all the time. It is not unusual for a dog to start out comfortably and then suddenly become concerned. Sometimes you can talk the dog through his uneasiness but you must be prepared to stop and start over and always be in control.

Congratulations! Your Berner is now an active participant in the heritage of our breed. Initially work in straight lines or large circles. Only gradually tighten the circles so your dog can get used to turning into the shafts.

Continue to remain tuned in to your Berner's level of comfort and confidence. When in doubt, slow down and be willing to back up a few steps if necessary. The time spent now is the foundation of a wonderful new working relationship with your Berner. Have fun together!!!

Another equipment source: Thank you, Martha Phelps, for sending a copy of the New England Draft Adventures catalog. NEDA offers two types of harnesses and some other basic draft equipment. Call 413-498-4341 for a catalog.

Next month: The finer points of maneuvering.

Draft Corner *invites questions and discussion.*

DRAFT TRAINING: Fun for all!
By Karyn Beyer

Time is going by FAST. Can you believe summer is almost over?!?!

The club has a lot of activities coming up soon, and draft is a big part of our upcoming events. First up is the August 22 match, followed by the October 15 test. I hope many of you are out training and getting ready – I know I am, although I'm not sure just how excited Sedona is about the whole thing! ☺

When you get ready to compete in any event, most handlers start escalating their training schedules and their expectations. This isn't always a good thing. Remember back in high school or college, right before the big exam, when you crammed in a semester's worth of work into that all night study session? Not only were you likely to forget most of it during the test, chances are you forgot the rest of it right afterwards. Training your dog for any event shouldn't be rushed. Odds are, you won't get the results you want, you will get frustrated and your dog won't be having any fun.

But hey, none of you are doing that, right? ☺

The match is a great practice session, and I encourage everyone to attend, regardless of your level, if you plan on entering the October test. If the October test is your ultimate goal, you still have plenty of time to get ready. If you've been out doing your draft work and practicing the fundamentals, then you may have encountered one of the common pitfalls of training – routine and monotony. Quite simply, perhaps you and your dog are getting a bit bored.

There are many ways to keep your training both fresh and effective. Below are some suggestions on keeping things interesting, and avoiding burnout for both your and your dog.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Chances are you have a particular spot or routine or area where you commonly train. Change it up! Draft is a functional activity, and should be done in many different locations. Consider shopping malls, main street, parks, youth baseball/soccer games – anywhere you are likely to run into people who want to visit with you and your dog, and where distractions are abundant. Be sure to load your cart up with the appropriate freight – TREATS! Having strangers greet and treat your dog when out working is great practice.

MAKE IT WORK

Tired of dragging around the bag of dog food as your practice weight? Give your dog a real job! Go to the local grocery store, and offer to help folks out with their groceries. There's your load, unload, stay, etc. Lots of good training, and the shoppers will love you for it – particularly older shoppers and folks with kids. Another great place is your

local nursery. Many nurseries have wagons and four wheel carts to help shoppers with plants and supplies; take your dog and cart and let them pull the plants around. Again, you can work a multitude of commands in a very practical setting.

GO BACK TO SCHOOL

School yards and campuses are wonderful training grounds. Those hallways between classrooms always seem to have those nicely spaced poles, which are perfect for weaving. Out on the playground, you can usually find a variety of terrain – blacktop, grass, sand, and lots of obstacles for practicing turns and maneuvers. Keep an eye out of baseball dugouts – the benches are usually right along a fence line, which is a wonderful location for practicing narrows and back ups, since you have barriers on each side of you.

CHANGE WILL DO YOU GOOD

Its easy to get caught up in a routine. Change it up! Keep the work interesting for both you and your dog. You want to avoid burnout for both of you – this should be fun! Don't expect each outing to mimic a test; set simpler goals and work on limited skills in certain situations. Finally, don't be afraid to simply take a break from it all. Draft training does NOT have to be entirely in the cart. As you know from earlier articles, the majority of draft skills can be taught outside the cart. Work on those skills – the basic control exercises, stays, stops, slow, back up. As always, your mantra, regardless of the activity should be FUN, FUN, FUN!

See you at the match!

Thoughts on Starting Berners in Draft Work
by Alison Jaskiewicz

I have now trained five Berners for draft work, one pre-draft tests and four who have earned draft titles. I have also taught draft classes for two summers. I would like to share some thoughts on guaging your progress in draft training to your dog's comfort level.

Three of my five Berners pulled a cart the first day they were introduced to draft work. They progressed rapidly through the steps of general exposure to the cart, walking beside a moving cart, accepting shafts by their side, walking between shafts, walking between shafts with the cart, and dragging a moderate weight with just the traces. Hitched to the cart they wagged their tails and pulled out happily. All three happen to have been males, but I know of bitches who have also reacted similarly.

My first bitch, Shira, took a full week of practicing with the shafts alone three times a day before she would tolerate being hitched to a cart. Even then she frequently looked behind her to know what was following so closely. I thought this was a very long time to take to adjust to shafts until Gita came along.

This young lady took 7 full weeks to accept just the shafts and I worked with her every day. Even my patience was wearing thin but I did see gradual progress. The first day I finally hitched Gita was fascinating. When I asked her to pull she was willing but only at a snail's pace! Inch by inch we progressed about ten feet. With profuse praise I unhitched her and told her how very very clever she was. She sparkled. I let her choose her pace to suit her own comfort level. We didn't cover much distance that first week of pulling but she gradually gained confidence and speed. She was concentrating very hard. Within a few weeks she was trotting by my side, confidence personified! She passed Novice Draft with flying colors seven weeks after first pulling the cart at that snail's pace.

Gita gave me a far deeper perspective into listening to my dog and working to her comfort level. This is especially important with draft work with the dog attached to a cart which is potentially dangerous if the dog panics and goes out of control - dangerous to the dog, the handler and any spectators. Time spent building comfort level and confidence is invaluable.

Being in a draft class where the dogs progress at different rates can be very frustrating to the owners of dogs like Gita. Other dogs are pulling in just a few weeks while they are still working with just the shafts. Your dog will be forever grateful if you exercise great patience. Your classmates will cheer every step of progress - great positive feedback for both you and your Berner. Your own ultimate reward will be a happy, tail-wagging Berner with a grin on his face and a prance in his step. His whole body carriage says,

"I'm proud to be a draft dog!"

DON'T PUT THE CART BEFORE THE DOG!
SIMPLE STEPS TO STARTING DRAFT WORK WITH YOUR DOG.

By Karyn Beyer (BMDCA Draft Judge, Draft Chair – Sierra West Bernese Mountain Dog Club, Member – BMDCA Draft Work Committee)

PART I

The first step to carting with your dog is the MOST IMPORTANT STEP: basic obedience. Nearly all of the basic control you need with your dog in the cart can be introduced without the cart. Many handlers make the mistake of putting their dog in the cart well before the dog can walk nicely on a leash, let alone stop and change pace on command. This is a bad idea. It makes training considerably harder, it overly stresses the dog and its dangerous. Dogs can be seriously injured in the cart and better to train beforehand than to risk injury.

Before you hitch up your dog, there are some basic commands that your dog should know, and know well. They aren't difficult to train, and can all be done while out on your morning/evening walk.

The first thing is being able to walk nicely on a leash. This doesn't have to be AKC obedience-quality heeling, but there should be minimal pulling, minimal yelling of repetitive commands and your walk should be at a nice, even pace. While doing this nice walk, introduce the slow or change of pace. Most dogs want to move out very quickly as soon as they are hitched (thinking they can get away from that contraption behind them), and its important that when you tell them SLOW! they actually know what you mean. Introduce that change of pace while on those morning/evening walks. Simply slow down and walk at a greatly reduced pace than normal. Put a command on it, saying SLOW or EASY as you go. Then, take the dog back to normal.

Finally, the most important command – STOP. Its simple, its basic, its critical. Integrate this into your walks, from both the normal pace and the slow pace. Getting a sit when you stop is not important; in fact, some dogs don't initial like to sit in the cart because they roll onto the shafts or bump them when getting back up, both of which can be uncomfortable and startling to the beginning dog. Don't cheat on this – STOP is an extremely important command. If the dog gets nervous in the cart, starts to jump or flail, or startles from a distraction, STOP can be a lifesaver, or at least an injury preventer.

Teaching these three basic commands can go very quickly. Discipline yourself to take a 20 minute walk every morning or evening, with lots of treats in hand and a happy voice. While you are working on these basic leash commands, you can also begin introducing the dog to the cart. Put the cart in the yard. Feed the dog his/her meals in the bed of the cart, or even between the shafts. Take the cart for a walk with you and the dog (either you pulling it on your right side or someone else pulling alongside you). The dog should be accustomed to the sight, sounds and smell of the cart. Better yet, get the dog excited about the cart – putting special treats in the cart bed for the dog and feeding the dog in or

around the cart can help acclimate the dog to the cart.

When you are confident in your dog's abilities to walk nicely on that leash, go slowly on command and stop, and the dog is unfazed by the sight and sound of the cart, you are ready to hitch the dog. Please, I am begging you – don't take short cuts on this. You want your dog to enjoy carting. From the minute the dog is hitched, you will use those walk, slow and stop commands. Your dog will be much more confident if you are using recognizable commands, things that he/she knows. Asking a dog to hitch up to a cart, pull a strange obstacle behind them (which is clearly trying to attack!) and respond to your foreign commands is asking a lot – perhaps too much – from your dog. Dogs that have very negative experiences when first hitched will approach the cart with trepidation and even fear they next time the cart comes out. Prepare your dog first!

A word about prong/pressure collars. I believe that prong/pressure collars have their place in training, but they are NOT a substitute for training. Please don't assume that you can skip training the basic commands because your plan is to simply slap that prong on the dog as soon as you hitch them up. A prong/pressure collar is a correctional device, and if your dog is getting massive corrections when first introduced to the cart, he/she may not have any idea what it is you want – "gee, I'm hitched to this contraption and I'm walking forward, but my person keeps snapping the collar and yelling at me! What the hell do they want? This carting thing sucks!" There may be a point where the prong/pressure collar is needed with the dog, but use it wisely and appropriate. A prong/pressure collar is NOT a substitute for training, it is an aid in training and should be used appropriately.

PART II

So, you've trained, you're confident and the dog wags his tail every time you go near the cart. You are ready to hitch up! Before you start, be sure to pick the right location. You want to hitch your dog for the first time in an area that is level, quiet, and has a LOT of room. Most dogs cannot/will not do tight turns when they are first starting out, so try to find a spot where you can proceed in a straight line for quite a ways, and do large, gentle, turns – more of a veering right or left rather than turning right or left. Empty parking lots are great locations, as are school yards and ball fields.

When hitching a dog to a cart for the very first time, there are two things you must have on hand – tons of GREAT treats, and a second person. Even the best trained dog is hard pressed to hold that stand-stay while you come up behind them with that thing and start attaching it to them. You want a second person that the dog knows. One of you should be at the dog's head, gently kneeling and holding the collar, talking to the dog, feeding treats, etc. The second person will approach from a straight line behind with the cart, slowly advancing the shafts up along side the dog. Throughout this process, keep talking to the dog and giving treats. For some dogs, you may only get as far as advancing the shafts. If the dog is clearly stressed, jumping about, twisting around to see what is going on, don't try to go any farther. Just aim for the dog's comfort level – can you bring the cart up behind the dog and into position, just

short of hitching the dog up? Work on this until the dog is comfortable.

When comfort is achieved, you can get the dog hitched. This might be a slow process the first time in, because you will likely be adjusting the harness loops where the shafts go through, and the length of the traces. The dog may not have a lot of patience for you fooling around back there, so better to get a feel for lengths and any needed adjustments, take the dog away (big praise, big treats), make your adjustments, and then bring the dog back. Don't try to make all those changes while forcing the dog to stand there, semi-attached to the cart.

When you are finally hitched up, your traces are the right length and the equipment is properly attached, you and your helper should each stand on either side of the dog and move forward. Keep talking, keep praising, keep treating. Do not let the dog move out too fast or get out of control. If you sense ANY problems coming up, or suspect the dog is starting to stress or get out of control, STOP. Stopping and starting are the keys to this first pull of the cart. If the dog seems to be getting out of step and discombobulated, STOP. Dogs are unlikely to walk themselves out of it and correct themselves. Better to stop and start again.

At this point, you will be glad you are going in a straight line, and hopefully have lots of room in front of you. When the time comes to turn around, if you cannot execute a huge looping circle, then have your helper go to the back of the cart. As you begin to turn the dog around, the helper should pick the cart up off the ground and swing it behind the dog back into position. For most dogs, turning in a cart is an acquired skill, not necessarily a natural one. They must learn to cross their paws over each other, and get a feel for the shaft. The location of the shaft will at first seem an impediment to turning, because as they move right or left, they immediately hit a solid object, so instinct is to move away. Once they get a feel for the shaft, the equipment and the process, they can pick up turns quickly. But for the beginner, don't rush them into it. Turning should be introduced in increments, and as the dog progresses in skill and comfort level, you can gradual tighten the degree of your turns.

As you continue with this first carting foray, you've probably quickly discovered the value of training leash walking, slow and stop. These are the only three commands that you will be using on these first few carting trips. Don't expect your dog to do much more than this for awhile. Fine tuning and finesse can be added when the dog is comfortable in the equipment, and their security level is such that they are ready to move on. Don't rush it, and don't force it – you want your dog to enjoy carting, and if you move too fast, your dog will quickly go in the opposite direction when the cart comes out for practice!

The most important thing with carting, as with all dog activities, is to have fun. That goes for you and your dog. If your dog has a tucked tail, wide eyes, heavy breathing and shying away, then you are moving way too fast and need to back up a few steps. For most berners, carting is quickly learned and readily enjoyed. Its instinct, its their heritage, and most will step up and enjoy having a job to do. However, there are the occasional dogs who do not take to it readily, and its your task to conduct the training and

introduce the equipment at the dog's pace, not at yours. Take your time, lay the proper groundwork and have fun building this working partnership!

Patience Redefined
by Alison Jaskiewicz

Two of the very first statements you will hear at a draft class or clinic are, "Don't rush your dog." and "Train to your dog's comfort level". I'd like to share two real life examples.

My first Berner, Kibo, took to draft work like a duck to water. He pulled a cart the very first day we introduced it. I thought all Berners would all be like Kibo . . . . . then came Shira. Harness and traces were fine but Shira thought the shafts were very scary indeed. I took the shafts off the wagon and practiced three short sessions a day for a week, just moving the shafts by her sides at first, then gently bumping her with them, and finally pulling just the shafts. I used lots of food and praise. That week seemed like forever, but she finally accepted the shafts and we progressed to actually pulling the wagon. She looked over her shoulders a lot for the first week or two, but then settled in and six weeks after starting she passed at the very first Nashoba Draft Match in 1989. Patience paid off.

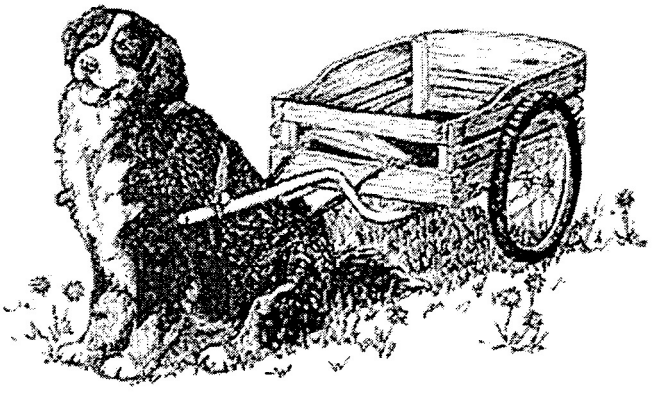
For years Shira was my example of being patient and taking the time to be sure your dog is comfortable at each step of training before proceeding to the next . . . . . then came Gita.

During the summer of 2000 I held a draft class which was also incentive for me to get my two youngsters, Gita and Kepler, started on draft as well. Kepler said "YaaaaaHooooo! This is FUN!". Gita said, "Wait a minute." What was her point of discomfort? Shafts, just like Shira. So I thought, OK we'll work this for a week or so and be ready to move on. Gita felt otherwise. We worked daily short sessions and seven weeks, yes SEVEN WEEKS, later Gita was finally comfortable enough to consider hitching her to a cart. My patience was wearing thin, but she was making slow progress from week to week. The first day I hitched her up she was very very tentative, taking very slow, very small steps. After six or eight feet I told her she was the most wonderful dog in the whole world, unhitched her and we were done for the day. The next day we went maybe twelve feet, still at a snail's pace. I let her choose her own comfort level. Over the ensuing days Gita gradually began to pick up speed and soon trotted happily. During July and August I had truly despaired of Gita ever even pulling a cart, but patience paid off and in the middle of October she passed Novice Draft with a jaunty trot and a wagging tail.

I am hoping not to have to redefine patience again with a future dog. That seven weeks was a very long time. But one never knows. Each dog is an individual and deserves to be treated with understanding and respect. Listen to what your dog is telling you and help them to reach understanding slowly and carefully. A happy dog and a great working relationship are worth whatever time it takes.

Happy Carting!

Drafting 101



Drafting 101

By Jerry Pixton

Introduction

The Berner is a "working" dog. Your Berner could carry some payload (his food for example) in a backpack and be doing work. But what this paper is going to consider is having your dog "pull" some payload instead of "carry" some payload. So I will be talking about some type of "cart" and "harness" that enables your dog to pull that payload for you. I will consider the situation where you want your dog to do this work in a BMDCA Draft Test. There are many other situations which may require different solutions. As we will see there are a series of competing "needs" to be met in order for you and your particular dog to be successful in this situation. And your job as the "leader" of this work team is to find the best match of equipment for your dog to maximize your probability of success. What we are looking for the win-win situation where you and your dog pass the Draft Test happily and safely. Instead of the lose-lose situation where your dog has passed in spite of what you have done. Or worse, where your dog gets hurt because of something you have done wrong.

The message of this paper is "There are a large number of choices that you make when you choose your dog, the harness to be used, the cart to be used and the load to pull". These choices will either be made sub-conscientiously or conscientiously.

We may make these choices sub-conscientiously, for example, we fly our dog into a test, grab any old cart that someone is willing to loan to us, borrow a spare harness from someone else, scrounge a sack of feed for a load and then ask our dog to "pass" the test. Our choices in this case are likely to be wrong but even worse may actually increase the likelihood that our dog might hurt themselves.

A better situation is to recognize that there is great variability in the sport of drafting (in dogs, harnesses, carts and loads) and you must conscientiously make the right decisions, to help your dog. There are many things you can do to help your dog work successfully with you. This paper will highlight some of these choices and how they compete. If you don't pay attention to these choices, you are just forcing your dog to work against greater odds.

Type of apparatus to be "pulled"

There are various types of apparatus that can be pulled e.g., a Cart, a Wagon, a Sled, or a Travois. (see Powell page 28 and 29). The choice of which apparatus to use is one of the more difficult choices for you to make. You are going to invest your money and a lot of energy training your dog with this apparatus. Think about how you want to work with your dog. Are you mainly interested in earning a Draft title for your teammate or will you be working every day with your dog hauling wood on your property?

For the purposes of a Draft Test, you are most likely to be using a cart (an single axle, two wheeled apparatus) or a wagon (an two axle, four wheeled apparatus). A wagon is easier to use when dealing with odd loads (child, wood, etc) but is difficult for your dog to back up. A cart on the other hand is much easier to back up and easy to maneuver but it is more difficult to get, and keep, the load balanced for your dog. Again a competing need – we need the load to be balanced (so the dog is pulling it, not carrying it) and we need to be able to back up (one of the Draft Test elements). For the rest of this paper I will be considering a cart. With a cart your dog pulls most of the weight of the payload and should carry very little. With a wagon your dog pulls all of the weight of the payload and carries none.

Cart Materials. Carts can be made out of various materials. Probably the most common material is wood. Metal can certainly be used and some home-made carts use PVC. Often the material used will dictate the style of cart; wheather it has a flat bed, a box or a basket to hold the payload. We see many variations here.

Wheel size. Different size wheels can be used on your cart's axle. The most common size may be a 16 inch wheel. This wheel usually has a pneumatic tire so you have to inflate the tire. The most common source for these wheels, if they didn't come on your cart or if you want to change the size, is a Bicycle shop. There are wheels made for carts (small number of spokes) or wheels made for bicycles (large number of spokes). Either type works well, but the bicycle wheel tends to have better ball bearings which means less rolling friction. If you buy some wheels from a Bicycle shop with pneumatic tires, have them put in a "thorn liner". These are very common for off-road bikes. This helps to avoid flat tires at a Draft Test because you picked up a thorn on your last Long Haul practice run.

In order to adjust your cart to the proper height for a taller dog, you may want to try 20 inch wheels. A larger wheel requires less "pull" by your dog in order to move your cart with its load over various terrains. So you can raise your cart if needed to get a more level arrangement while at the same time making it easier for your dog to pull your load.

You might choose to go the other way – lowering your cart by using a smaller wheel. This does lower the Center of Gravity (discussed below) but the smaller wheel is harder to pull and often requires curved shafts in order to balance everything.

Another consideration is the type of terrain to be traversed. In sandy, loose, or soggy soils, a broader wheel will have the advantage. On concrete or asphalt surface, a narrow wheel has less rolling friction. A good compromise is the pneumatic tire that is about 2 inches wide. For soft terrain, you can under inflate the tire; for solid terrains, you can full inflate the tire.

Axle Height. The height of the axle is of course determined by the size of the wheel you use. The lower the axle height, the lower the Center of Gravity will be making the cart more stable, but the harder the cart will be to pull. Again competing needs. Another variable here, and probably more important, is how far the box is above the axle. Often you will see the axle placed on struts in order to raise the height of the box up to more balanced setting. But the box is holding our load and the further we move the box above the axle, the more we raise the Center of Gravity and create a "lever arm" (see section on Lever Arms) that allows our load to rotate the cart, either increasing the downward pressure on the dogs withers or worse tipping the cart backwards where your dog has no way of controlling it. The ideal cart would have the box resting directly on the axle with no "lever arm".

Singletree Height. A Singletree is used to balance the force (pull) applied to the cart in the forward direction so that your dog's motion as his legs swing forward and then aft will be applied smoothly to move the cart forward without rocking from side to side. This force is transferred from your dog's Harness, through the Traces to the Singletree. You should never fasten the Traces directly to the cart; you are just hampering your dogs ability to move the cart smoothly. The Singletree ideally should pull in line with the axle. The more the Singletree attachment point is above the axle the more downward pressure is created at the Shaft Loop support points as the dog pulls the cart. That is, the cart tends to be rotated about the axle when the attaching point of the Singletree is above the axle, causing your dog to carry more of the weight.

Center of Gravity. The position of box as it is attached to the axle determines how our load will react. We want the weight to be as close to the axle as possible. The further the Center of Gravity point of our load is from the axle the more the cart has a tendency to tip. If the Center of Gravity moves forward of

the axle, this causes your dog to carry more weight. If the Center of Gravity moves aft of the axle then the cart wants to tip backwards.

Distance between wheels. The distance between the wheels, or how wide the cart is, has a direct influence on the stability of your cart also. The further apart the cart wheels are the more stable the cart is. So the cart with a wider box, often used with brace teams, will be more stable for a single dog than the more popular "competition" style cart. But it is harder to maneuver in tight situations. On the other hand, you do have more room in the "narrows". If you put a heavy load in a cart with a high Center of Gravity and narrow bed, it becomes very unstable. Not only is it likely to tip backwards but if one cart wheel hits a rock or root or drops into a hole, the cart is very likely to tip sideways and overturn.

Type of Shaft. The Shafts on your cart may be straight or curved. Which ever they are you want to position the dog end of the Shafts properly on your dog. The Shafts are there to allow your dog to steer the cart, to allow a point at the Shaft Loops where any forward rotation of the cart can be controlled and to hold back the cart and its load (braking) when moving downhill. The Shafts are not used to move the cart forward – the traces are used for that purpose. The solid Shaft also allows your dog to back the cart working with the Brake mechanism and the Shaft Loops.

In the horizontal direction, you want the shafts approaching your dog in a near level manner, going through the Shaft Loops on your Harness and the tips just coming to the front of your dog near the sternum point.

If the shafts stick too far forward, they tend to get into your dog's sight line and cause trouble. Your dog will see these shaft ends out of the corner of his eye and they keep chasing him. No matter how he moves they stay right there, chasing him. Pretty soon, he becomes frightened and tries to turn and run. Now you have big troubles that may require quite a lot of remedial training to undo the damage.

If the shafts are not near level or are too short, then they may be poking your dog in the neck on turns (assuming your cart is not so tall that the shafts are tipped down to your dog). The distance from the Shaft Loops to the tips is close to 8 inches on most of our dogs. You can adjust the position of the brake mechanism (see the next topic) so that the tips of the shafts just come to the front of your dog. You should be able to put a "yard" stick across your dog's neck and just about touch the tips of the shafts.

In the vertical direction we want the shafts to be positioned by the dog's shoulders at about the sternum height.

Straight shafts often cause us to want to raise the height of the cart (bigger wheels, put the axle further from the box, raise the shafts on the box, etc.) in order to bring things into alignment. Curved shafts on the other hand allow us to lower the box closer to the axle while still keeping things aligned.

Position of Brake. You need some type of braking mechanism on your shafts so that your dog can hold back your cart and its load when going downhill. This brake has to interact with your dog's Harness so that he can control the cart. This interaction occurs through the Shaft Loops on the Forward Cinch of a Siwash Harness or the Shaft Loops on the Cinch of a Buckle Harness. These Shaft Loops should ride about 1 inch forward of the brake mechanism on the cart shaft when your dog is pulling the cart forward and then will quickly take up the slack when the cart is pushing the dog. So we also want the Shaft Loops to be as close to the Forward Cinch as possible so this interaction occurs quickly. When the Shaft Loop is on the end of a Quick-Off buckle, there is a lot of slop in this interaction. Again, making it harder for your dog to work effectively for you.

Lever Arms. There are several mechanical "lever arms" that have been mentioned which generally serve to rotate your cart undesirably. There is the "lever arm" created because the surface (box, platform, etc) supporting our weight (payload) is raised above the axle. This has a double impact on us. First, the longer this level arm is, the more likely it is that the Center of Gravity of our payload will move either forward or aft of the axle. This further rotates the cart making it more difficult for your dog to control the cart. But also because we have raised the box, the possible attachment points for the Singletree have also been raised, causing the forward pull at the Singletree to rotate the cart such that your dog is carrying more weight (downward pressure at the Shaft Loops).

Single Axle Carts Rotate. Carts by definition have only one axle. It is very easy for your load to cause the cart to rotate. For stability, you want your cart to ride level so the weight is balanced (that is, the Center of Gravity of the load is directly above the axle). Often this implies that you would like to use curved shafts. These are easy to produce with metal shafts but much harder to produce in wood.

A word of caution here. If you are just beginning to draft with your dog, DO NOT build your own cart. Unless you are following a well engineered set of plans, you are bound to get many of these choices wrong and then you will be wondering why your dog seems to be having a hard time getting into drafting. A disturbing trend is seen with beginners who build their own carts. These carts tend to be too high with a narrow cart bed and thus very unstable. With a handler and a dog who are both just beginning to learn how to deal with this cart and load on various terrains, the potential for problems is very high.

Harness to be used

The most widely used harnesses for our drafting purposes are likely the Siwash Harness followed by the Buckle Harness. See the papers in the previous section for a discussion on each of these harnesses. But to summarize here. The Siwash Harness allows your dog more freedom of leg movement but can be intimidating for a beginner to understand how to harness your dog with all the straps. Once you understand how to put this type of harness on, it is very easy and quick to harness your dog. The Buckle Harness is easy to put on your dog, but slightly constrains your dog's leg movement. This constraint may not be of any great importance given the short duration of a Draft Test.

Putting it all together

Pulley Model. Think of your dog pulling a cart. The dogs shoulders and neck form a large pulley over which the harness rotates. The D Ring (where the Traces are attached) forms a pivot point. The Singletree is a second pivot point. The axle is yet a third pivot point. All this flexibility needs to be kept in balance in order to help your dog work most efficiently for you.

The Siwash harness should be adjusted so that tension in the Traces transfers equally to the upper and lower straps holding the D Rings. This keeps the collar riding properly on the dog. If the upper trace has too much tension then the collar will ride backwards on the withers and cause pressure on the dogs throat. If the lower trace has too much tension then the collar will ride forward on the dogs neck causing pressure there. This establishes the vertical position of the D Rings.

The D Rings should be about 2/3 back between the dogs legs (near the last rib). The D Rings don't want to be so far back that they (or the trace snaps) hit the front of the dog's rear legs causing an irritation. Also if you use the Rear Cinch (by the D Ring) this wants to ride forward enough for comfort on a male dog. This establishes the horizontal position for the D Rings.

With the Buckle Harness we need to again purchase the correct size of harness for our dog. When the harness is placed on the dog, adjust the side buckles so that:

1. The D Rings receiving the traces and the Shaft Loops for braking are in a plane roughly equal to the Shafts and that the breastplate lies across the chest at shoulder height and
2. Once the buckles are so adjusted, there should be enough room between the straps comprising the harness and the dog to insert 4 fingers laid flat.

Load balancing. Some downward pressure at the withers is desirable. You would like about 3 to 5 pounds of down pressure at the Shaft Loop support point (about 1" forward of the brake) for stability. But notice that when your dog does a "Down" for the Long Stay with a loaded cart, this downward pressure increases several times (pushing down on your dog's withers) so you don't want much more then this with a level cart.

To determine this downward pressure, you can use the same type of balance scale that fisherman use to weight their small catch. Place a small rod under the cart shafts, at the brake mechanism, hook the fish scale over the rod, centered between the shafts, and lift the scale up until the cart shafts are in the position they normally ride in with your dog, i.e., the same distance from the ground. The scale will indicate the downward force at this point. You can do this with an empty cart and then put your weights in the cart and weight it again. If your load is well balance (i.e., is being carried by the axle) then your readings will be very close. If your weight is not balanced, i.e., the Center of Gravity is either forward or aft of the axle, you will also see this easily on the scales as a change in the downward pressure.

You can compensate for the cart being unbalanced (i.e., too little or too much down pressure) by moving the weight slightly. But you want repeatability from test to test. So sacks of cat litter or dog food thrown in the cart is not a good weight to use for repeatability. On the other hand, a set of bar bell weights that are mounted on a spindle in a fixed position in your cart is very repeatable. Once you get it right, you can set it up quickly and know that you are helping your dog by having the right balance each time.

Signs of Trouble

Forward Cinch being pulled back. Have your dog pull his cart for a short distance and watch how the Forward Cinch rides. If you see the Forward Cinch of your Siwash Harness being moved back off the withers, this is probably a sign that the harness is rotating. With a Siwash Harness, this would indicate too much tension on the upper D Ring webbing. Or it could be that your collar is simply too big. If you see the Forward Cinch moving forward of the dog's withers, this would indicate too much tension in the lower D Ring webbing. In either case you need to readjust the lengths of the webbing to get the proper balance of tension being distributed equally through both webbing straps to the Harness collar where your dog is pushing.

Cart just doesn't look right? Have someone else lead your dog around a level area. How does the cart and shafts and Singletree look? Does the cart bed appeared to be level or tilted? Are the shafts reasonably parallel to the ground or are they tipped up so that the ends could poke your dog's neck? Do the Shaft Loops seem to be swinging back and forth or do they appear solid? If things don't look right, they probably are not right!

Traces loose when dog pulling cart forward. If you see your Singletree hanging down with slack in the Traces, this indicates that your dog is pulling the cart by the shafts (wrong) and not the Traces (right). So shorten up your Traces. The Shafts are there just to allow your dog to steer the cart, to control the rotation of the cart caused by pulling it forward and to hold back the weight (braking).

Shaft loops pointing up, forward or backwards. The shaft loops should have just enough slack in them to fit over the cart shaft. Sometimes a Quick snap-off connection is put on the Forward Cinch (Siwash) for ease of harnessing your dog. But the problem with that idea is it lengthens the Shaft Loop away from the Cinch and the Shaft Loop can swing forward on braking or swing backwards on pulling – both actions allow slop between what your dog is trying to do to control the cart and the reactions of the cart fed back to your dog.

Trace connectors (e.g., snaps) hitting your dog's rear legs. Your harness is too long. You will need to shorten up both upper and lower D Ring webbings on your Siwash Harness.

Narrow cart bed with high Center of Gravity. Exchange this cart for a different cart with a wider axle closer to the load before you injure you dog.

Newer Siwash Harnesses need to be modified.

Many of the newer Siwash Haresses have only a single adjustment buckle in the upper D Ring strap. And a second problem with these newer harnesses - they also seem to be scaled for a larger dog than a Berner with a much longer body. The adjustment in the upper strap will indeed raise the D Ring vertically. But then the lower strap has no tension and the collar moves against the dog' throat. This implies that there should be an adjustment in the lower strap also so that the D Ring can be adjusted both vertically and horizontally. This second buckle, in the lower strap will also allow us to take care of the fact that the harness is scaled wrong for a Berner. We can now shorten up both straps to move the D Ring forward and adjust it vertically for balance. So take your harness to a shoe repair shop or some place that repairs harnesses for horses and have a second buckle sown in the lower strap. These buckles are called Triglides (single bar in middle) or Ladderlock Buckles (double bar in middle) and can be purchased from many camping stores.

One of the guidance points that is sometimes heard is "the D Ring should be in the plane of the Shafts". If the D Ring happens to be next to the shaft (in the plane of the shaft) this implies that the Singletree must also be in the plane of the shafts or else the tension will not transfer equally from the Traces to the D Ring upper and lower straps. So this really is a special case if this happens.

Conclusion

With all these variables to work with, it is no wonder that so many of us get it wrong for a while as we are learning this sport. You have many choices to make. Some of the options are dictated by our equipment manufactures so it becomes a matter of which vendor's equipment allows me to adjust things for my particular dog. When we get everything right, we are giving our dogs every chance to succeed. When we continue to allow things to be wrong, we are at the very least making our dogs work harder. And we stand of good chance of hurting our dogs. So let's learn how to do it right. Don't be shy in asking for help if things don't seem to be working for your team.

What does it mean, to "work" a harness and why is it important?

By Steve Dudley

Let's break the subject down to 3 components for a better understanding.

1. Skill

Imagine you are blind. Instead of pulling a cart via a harness, imagine instead a handle attached to the harness and that the dog must guide you. The harness becomes a two way sensory mechanism. Through it, you as a blind person, receive sensory input on your environment as interacted with by your dog. The dogs' interactions and reactions with the environment are transmitted through the harness and handle to you. An immense amount of information can be transferred through the sense of touch and feel. Conversely, your guide dog, for the most part, cannot see you. He/she must learn to react correctly to nonverbal input received from you as transmitted back through the harness. They must learn to perceive your presence and condition, and react. This is known as learning the spatial relationship of the attached object relative to the dogs' position. Even more important, a practiced/experienced dog not only reacts to input received through the harness, it also becomes highly adept at intelligently initiating actions to handle and mitigate environmental conditions ahead of it. That is, it "works" the harness appropriately to anticipated needed corrections in environmental conditions to mitigate adverse impacts to the object attached to the harness. Learning to work a harness efficiently and to safely manage a load, be it a blind person or a wagon/cart, has the same foundational training needs. If you ever have an opportunity, visit a Guide Dogs For the Blind facility and watch their beginning harness training, it's remarkably parallel to introducing a working dog to carting. The dog must come to understand the spatial relationship (the concept for the "feel" of a load trailing several feet behind) of the load it is responsible for and read approaching environmental conditions to confidently initiate necessary bodily interactions into the harness to insure the load moves efficiently and safely. A dog that knows how to "work" a harness demonstrates presence of mind and attention (focus) to the task at hand with an air of confidence. This is the skillful aspect of working a harness.

2. Work Ethic

A working dog should also be instilled with a good work ethic (attitude). A work ethic is the component that entails thoughtful, stimulating and challenging practice to achieve mental and physical conditioning. This is largely a topic for another article but, there are many preparatory things you can do to begin teaching the dog a positive work ethic. For example, once the dog has been properly introduced to wearing a correctly fitted harness and has accepted traces without anything attached, it's good to begin training the dog to drag lightweight loads with the harness. Compensatory to the dogs' age and physical development begin by having young dog drag 2-3 pound blocks of wood. As the dog matures to 2 years of age work up to having the dog drag a 13-14 inch tire (without rim). The dog should become experienced in dragging inanimate objects that produce ground friction/resistance over a wide variety of terrains, including downhill. The drag accomplishes two things. First it teaches the dog that no matter the terrain there will always be friction behind them from the load and in order to move the load the harness must be worked into. As the dog encounters a variety of terrain with a drag it also becomes adept at reading the environmental cues as transmitted to the harness. Secondly, it lays the necessary foundation for physical conditioning and provides opportunity for you to begin development of a positive mental attitude toward work in the dog.

(Fig.1) Your dog should NOT see you as such

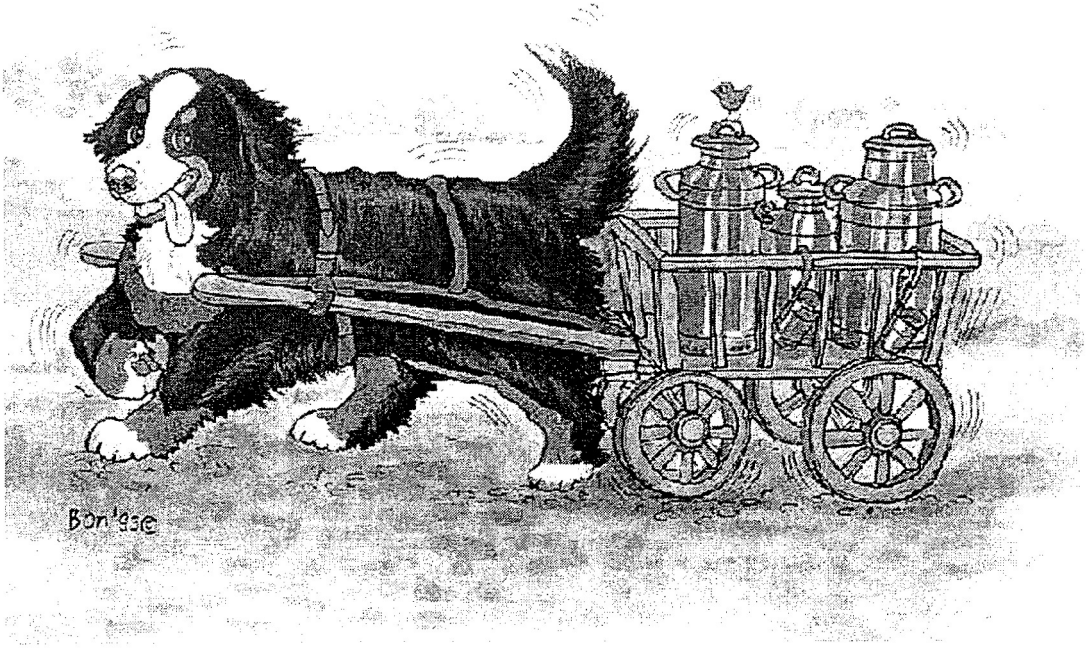
3. Teamwork

In addition to the dog understanding the spatial relationship of a trailing load and how manipulations to the harness will affect that load, the dog should also be receiving relevant input from the other member of the team, YOU. You must learn and understand what the dog is feeling through a harness pulling a trailing load so as not to give conflicting input when the dog is working (Fig. 1). Understand physically what it takes for a dog to pull and know how dogs physically position themselves to compensate for loads of varying degrees. Know the dogs anatomy and how they position their skeletal system and musculature to accommodate pulling loads (Fig. 2). To do this take time to visit and/or watch canine weight pulls, visit a farm that utilizes working draft dogs, and look at texts to grasp correct canine structure and how that structure is employed to move loads placed on it. It can also be greatly beneficial to take your cart/wagon and attach a strap across the front of the shafts. Take the time to pull the cart/wagon by this strap over as wide a spectrum of terrains as possible, uphill, downhill, side slope, rough ground, wet ground, through

(Fig. 2) Leaning into loaded harness, arched back, neck extended, head down.

puddles, deep grass, etc., and note how it feels! Gain some appreciation for what your dog is feeling and what you're asking of him/her so you can be better prepared to give commands, directions and input that does not conflict with the physical realities being exerted on the dog by its load.

Though it can be as simple as slipping a harness on a novice dog and attaching a cart to it and have the dog pull it with minimal effort due to instinct, you are doing both you and your dog an injustice by not teaching it a proper work ethic and providing for skillful work. From a safety standpoint a dog in harness and hooked to a load without the benefit of proper experience can injure you or worse, injure itself. It can happen under the most simple of circumstances and amazingly fast. Inability to properly work a harness is one of the root problems causing dogs to fail in draft tests. Please do yourself and your dog a favor, secure a good quality, properly fitting harness and teach them how to properly utilize it to its intended purpose. You'll both enjoy years of drafting activities safely and happily.



Happy Trails!

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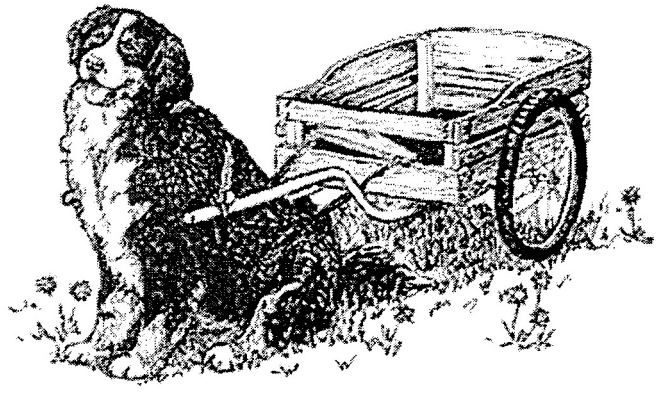
Preparing for your First Draft Test



PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST DRAFT TEST

By Karyn Beyer (BMDCA Draft Judge, Draft Chair – Sierra West Bernese Mountain Dog Club, Member – BMDCA Draft Work Committee)

Your first draft test is a few weeks away, and you and your canine partner (whom I shall call Partner) have been working hard on your training and preparation. You and Partner can execute nice tight turns around the trees in your yard and Partner slides the cart through those narrows like nobody's business. You have both mastered the freight haul and can comfortably pull at least 35 pounds (just to be safe) at least two miles without panting (that goes for both of you).

But are you really ready? Have you mastered the finer points that judges evaluate? Many draft teams fail not on maneuvering the ring obstacles (narrows, movable object, load/unload) but on the seemingly minor details that make you and Partner a true working team — control, leashwork, control, clean stops, control, change of pace, control, backing up and control.

Judges watch for a true working team. Is Partner focused on you? Is he waiting for your next command? Is he working ***with*** you or is he just enjoying the day and the distractions, occasionally following you when you move away? Do you find yourself repeating commands two to three times before Partner responds? Are you yelling your commands hoping your loud voice will break his concentration as he sniffs the ground? A well-focused, well-prepared dog responds quickly and readily to your first command. His interest is in you and what you and he are doing. He knows he has a job to do and performs it quickly when asked.

LEASHWORK

Leashwork is a major problem for many draft teams. As soon as you get in the ring, your hands start to fret. You aren't conscious of it, but you are slowly gathering up the slack. Before your first turn, that nice loose lead has gotten so tight your hand is only inches above Partner's head.

Or perhaps you aren't the nervous gathering type. Another common sight are the flailing hands, clapping, swinging, guiding the 747 overhead in for a safe landing…

The easy thing to say, and the hardest thing to do, is RELAX! We all know how those nerves hit. When you and Partner are out practicing, fold your left hand into your stomach, holding the leash at a comfortable loose length, and LEAVE IT THERE. The leash is not a steering wheel, a hand brake or attention getter. Partner should be responding to your voice and your body, not your leash. The role of the leash in a Novice Draft Dog test is defined in the BMDCA draft regulations: "All exercises except the recall, harnessing, hitching and group stays are performed on leash, however, the leash must be visibly slack and is not to be used to physically guide the dog during the exercises. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash will result in a failing performance."

Picture this: You are approaching an obstacle that requires a right turn. You say "Partner, right! Come on, right!"

Partner, on the other hand, wants to go straight, since there is a really cute puppy on the other side of the ring. You are going one way, he is going another. You are missing the turn and the leash is getting tight. What do you do? Do you: (a) move closer to Partner to keep the leash loose, keep yelling "Right!" at him and hope he turns; (b) hope the judge is also looking at the cute puppy and give a quick jerk on the leash, pulling Partner's head back towards you and into the turn; or (c) tell Partner to stop, evaluate your location, get his focus back, adjust accordingly (reapproach the turn, back up if necessary) and complete the exercise.

Most folks choose (a) and move into the dog to maintain the loose lead, even if it means getting off course. Unfortunately, this usually does not work, and the judges recognize it for what it is — poor control leading to poor leashwork. Handlers often compensate for the tight lead by moving closer to the dog, rather than getting the dog back on track. This can happen on turns, during the heel on the basic control, on the freight haul.

The correct answer is (c). The situation is very common (the distractions differ) but it doesn't mean an automatic fail. But you can't execute (c) without those critical elements of control. In this case, the most important control command will be STOP!

STOP!

Stop is the most important command in your training. If you and Partner are working at a safe, controlled pace, the stop should come quickly and easily, and on the first command. It may take a few steps depending on the speed you are moving at, but Partner should respond to the command immediately. Being able to execute a clean Stop can save you in a number of situations. If you misjudge a turn, STOP and adjust. If you are heading into an obstacle, STOP, back up if necessary and reapproach the obstacle correctly. If you momentarily lose your memory and have no idea where you should go next (yes, this does happen), STOP and ask a judge.

Stopping is easy to practice. No matter what you are doing, STOP. Doing turns? Stop in the middle. Practicing the freight haul? Stop every few feet. A stop is a stationary position. That means no creeping. Once Partner is stopped, he should stay stopped. If he moves while you open the gate, take the load, evaluate the situation, he will fail. When you tell Partner Stop, can you walk a few feet away without him moving? Can you circle the cart and/or stand behind him without him moving? Once you have stopped successfully, you may tell Partner "sit" or "down" or "stay" - whatever command will leave him in stationary position.

CHANGE OF PACE/SLOW

Perhaps the second most important command in training is SLOW, or the change of pace. Changing pace is a required exercise during the test, but it is also very important for successful execution of the obstacles and the freight haul. Many handlers overlook this command. When they get in the ring, they merely slow themselves down during the change of pace exercise, assuming the dog will adjust accordingly, or the judge will see the handler walking slow and somehow miss

the dog maintaining his normal work speed.

Dogs not accustomed to doing a SLOW don't adjust to the handler, they merely move out to the end of the leash and work at their normal speed. Now, not only has the team failed the change of pace but the leash is probably stretched tight as well.

A well trained change of pace can come in quite handy in many areas. The most common benefit is the narrows. Picture this: You approach the narrows, stop Partner and look at the distance on either side. Partner is approaching straight and even with the sides. You give him the command to move forward. He starts at his normal pace, veers slightly and the wheel hits the side. By the time you say STOP, he is halfway through.

A safer approach is to tell Partner SLOW. He steps forward one step, two steps, three steps. You see him starting to veer off path. You say STOP! Back him up and start again, moving slowly. This time, he goes straight and clears the sides.

A successful SLOW can get your through most of the obstacles safely and clearly. If Partner can change his pace when you ask, it gives you those extra few seconds to evaluate the position, the distance to the obstacle, the angle of the turn. And if you see a problem, you tell Partner STOP and adjust accordingly. If Partner works only at one speed, by the time you realize the problem you will likely have failed to obstacle.

The SLOW is also critical on the freight haul. You and Partner have been working solo in your training, but during the test you will perform the freight haul in a group. This likely means teams in front of you, teams behind you and hills. Partner has no trouble at home and the two of you work at a nice brisk pace. Unfortunately, during your test freight haul, the team in front of you is a nice older handler, with a sweet well mannered bitch. They are in no hurry and their natural pace couldn't outrun a turtle. You can ask to pass, but a judge may say no. A judge will want to see if you can control Partner and work at a slower pace to accommodate the team in front of you. You tell Partner SLOW and he does just that, slowing down enough to maintain a safe distance between you and the team in front. You have now demonstrated suitable control to the judge, and at the next stop you and Partner are allowed to pass.

The SLOW command may be your only tool to combat gravity on the downhill. Partner has the cart and the weight behind him, and it is pushing him forward. He doesn't want to fight it, he wants to move out and get this over with. If you let him, you are not only showing a lack of control, but placing you and Partner in danger. Failing the test will be the least of your worries if the cart rolls with Partner still in harness. Take the hills slowly and be safe. The freight haul is not a timed exercise. Judges are looking for teamwork and control, not speed.

BACKING UP

Like SLOW, this is a required exercise in the draft test. And also like Slow, this command can save you and Partner from many potentially failing situations. In all the sample scenarios

above, the dog is heading in the wrong direction. If this wrong direction is into a tight corner, there may not be sufficient room for Partner to turn around. Or, if you are in the narrows, turning may not be an option at all.

But if Partner can back up on command, you can often maneuver yourselves right out of a problem and back into safety. What you ultimately demonstrate when you do this is Control. Yet many teams choose to play the odds and only move in one direction. You must train Partner to back up regardless; start incorporating into your maneuvering and obstacle work. It could make all the difference!

The common denominator to all aspects of a draft test is basic control. Many failing teams can maneuver the ring obstacles, but their performances are fraught with tight leashes, sloppy stops and a questionable change of pace. If they do get into trouble, few teams think of backing out of the problem. Blind luck and limited training will not prepare you and Partner for the draft test.

The little elements that tend to get overlooked and not emphasized in training are usually the very things that cause a team to fail. Even if you have never gone through the narrows or encountered the movable obstacle, if you can successfully execute a Stop, a Slow, and a backup without waiving your hands and leash like you are trying to guide a plane to landing, you and Partner should be able to handle any ring obstacle or freight haul situation.

And finally, the single most important thing to remember when training for the draft test, when you are in the draft test and after the draft test (regardless of whether you pass or fail): HAVE FUN!!!

SARA'S TIPS ON CARTING IN A TEST

By Sara Steele

Attention:

The most important thing for you to remember, and this will apply to all activities (Carting, Obedience, Agility, Freestyle, Conformation, you name it), is to maintain that line of connection with your dog at all times. This connection begins even before your warm-up and does not end until after you have left the ring and have praised and treated your dog lavishly. To borrow on the words of Obedience/Agility expert, Terri Arnold, it is "you and your dog alone in the world. " The best way to keep your dog's attention is to pay attention to your dog! When the judge chats with you in the ring at beginning of your performance, your eyes are to be glued upon your dog and your dogs eyes on you. You should listen to the judge, but eyes are on the dog.

Attention training should start before you teach the dog to do anything at all. But, in case you haven't done this, it is never to late to start. Without an attentive, alert dog at the other end of the lead, there is nothing much you can do. There are many ways of keeping your dog's attention, but the best way is to have well established to your dog that "you are the most fun being/thing in the whole wide world." You are better than treats and better than toys. Practice just playing physically with your dog---using no toys at all. Do this also at Fun/Correction/Show &Go Matches. Enter the ring with your dog in all earnestness and seriousness. Let the Judge give the first few commands, obey those commands, then---suddenly---break your dog out and start a fun game with your dog. Your dog will, then, never take his eyes off you, as he will be expecting those games to happen at anytime, anywhere There are books and games that you can play with your dog to help you gain that "most fun" status. Check out Terri Arnold (Stepping Up Dog School), my teacher.

When you are in the ring, preoccupied with lining up for the Narrows, moving the movable obstacle or opening the gate, or shaking the hands and speaking with the load/unload steward, you attention should still be on the dog. Your dog must not do a single eenie weenie little thing without you being aware of it. You "mustn't miss a trick." (...) Many crashes in the Narrows are due to the dog's becoming distracted by something. If that line of connection is open, you can keep your dog's attention on you, even if loud noises sudden motions should happen outside the ring. Should you lose your dog in the Narrows and he turns his head, he will follow his head and it is very likely that he will crash it.

Another place in the Draft Ring where dogs are frequently lost is when the unload steward greets the dog. Again, who is "the most fun person in the world"? Not that steward, I assure you. You also may say a single "stay" multiple times, if needed.

Focus:

You must pay attention not only to your dog, but also to what you are doing. If, by the way, you are doing both of these things, there will be little room left over in your brain for the jitters. This is "focus." When in the ring you must not be thinking about the title

that you expect to get that day and you must not be thinking about the booboo you just made. That mistake is gone and will never be seen again. Just go and try to find it! It is gone, so why think about it anymore? Be very familiar with the maneuvers pattern. There is no excuse for not knowing the pattern. After you have completed one exercise, say, making a circle right around the orange cone, you will already know that the next exercise is to make a left turn at the milkcan; so, after you have finished the orange cone, you will be thinking of nothing else in the whole wide world except your dog and that milkcan coming up. Should that orange cone be followed by the Slow, after the cone you will be thinking about speeding up a little (circling around the cone will have slowed your speed down) to regain your normal, so that when the judge calls the slow, you will be in a good Normal, from which to change the pace to the slow. That is the way to maintain focus---think about your dog and about what you are doing. It really works!

The Slow/Change of Pace

As I just mentioned the Slow above, this is a good place to discuss it further.
There are TWO Slow/Changes of Pace in a Draft Test: the first is in Basic Control, in the Heeling exercise and the second is during the Maneuvers. In Obedience when you fail to demonstrate a good change of pace, you lose points. Failure to demonstrate change of pace in these two places in the Draft test can be grounds for failure. And, what makes it even harder, is that it can be a subjective decision on the judge's part. When you bang into the Narrows or fail to back, those are objective reasons to fail. Black and white. The change of pace is more iffy, more gray, so you had better make darn-tootin sure that you have developed a good change of pace that will be very clear, beyond all reasonable doubt to the judges.

This is a difficult exercise and I will admit that, as a judge, I have not seen many really good ones! (...) The mistake that most handlers make is that when the judge calls "Slow" they slow down way too fast, causing the dog to bobble and frequently to sit. It is much the same as slamming on the brakes with a car, causing all of your passengers to lunge forward in their seats and bobble backwards again. This is what a dog does if the handler goes into the slow too abruptly. Your dog may also interpret your sudden change to a slow as a signal for a Halt. This is why you see so many "sits" during the slow. Normal-sit-normal-sit, while it eats up more time in covering the 10 required feet, does NOT constitute a slow. The best way to get a good change of pace to a slow is to simply SLOW DOWN, ease up on your speed, just as you would lightly apply pressure to the brake pedal to slow down a car. Practice, both with the cart and without it, doing really long slows, like going the full length of the ring or even all the way around the ring. Getting back out of the Slow into the Normal is generally not a problem for people, because even if they never achieved the Slow and are still in a Normal, they can always, at this point, break into a Fast.

Harness & Hitch:

Keep your cool here. You can take as much time with this as you want. You can, in fact, TAKE YOUR TIME WITH ALLOF THE EXERCISES EXCEPT THE BACKUP, which is one minute and is timed. Make sure that you know how to put on your harness correctly. Practice this everyday if your are concerned about it. Practice it in the rain;

practice in the dark. Your harness must fit your dog properly, and this is something that you can have established at home well ahead of time. It should not be too tight (clinging, for example against the dog's trachea), and it should not be hanging lose like a garland on a Christmas tree. Make sure (!) that there are no twists in your harness and make sure that there is no hair caught in the buckles. The easiest thing for a judge to notice is whether there is a twist or whether there is hair caught. Don't make it easy for the judge to fail you; make them work really hard at it.

More and more judges are coming up and viewing the harness at close range and many are now actually touching and tugging on the harness and feeling around for caught hair. You must "proof" your dog for this. So practice having your dog stand in place, harnessed and hitched, while strangers come up close and touch and tug at the harness. Have these strangers sometimes where big floppy raincoats or big funny-looking hats, as this may very well happen in the ring.

The Cardinal BooBoos:
At all times the judges will be looking for the following: tight leash, leash guiding, adapting to your dog's pace, touching your dog during the exercise, hovering, and body blocking. Sometimes handlers do these things deliberately, hoping that the judges won't catch it, but oftentimes, they aren't even aware that they are doing it. Have a friend watch you, or, better, have that friend videotape you. Then you can notice if you may be doing any of these things, all of which are grounds for failure and may be subjective calls.

Backup:
This is a timed exercise---the ONLY place in the entire Draft Test where you do not have the luxury of taking your time. Make sure you are on level ground. Stablilize your dog, making sure that he is in between the shafts, with both shafts equally parallel to his body. This way, you are more likely to achieve a straight backup. You do not, by the way, have to back perfectly straight. Just don't go acute (do less than 90 degrees)---ie. "jacknife." Once your dog is stable, indicate to the judge that he can place the stick. Once the stick is down, the judge will say "Back your dog." The clock starts then. Should your dog, after the command is given and the clock has started, move FORWARD, alas, you must add that distance onto your backing distance. Be really careful to avoid hovering and body blocking on this exercise, as the judges will be watching you like hawks on this.

Circles and Serpentines and Turns:
You can practice in your park by circling and weaving and making turns around bushes and trees. Another way I am fond of doing it, is to set out four orange soccer cones, about 10 feet apart. I make a complete circle left around the first one and then serpentine my way to the fourth one, where I make a complete circle right, and then serpentine my way back again. Sometimes, I may start with a circle right and do just the opposite of the above pattern. With just those four little cones, I know that I have done my job.

Narrows:

Take plenty of time here, time to make sure that you are lined up correctly. If by chance you are very close to the Narrows and find that you are in a bad position, circle back and start all over again. Something else that I have done is to use backing in this case. BACKING: I have taught my dogs to Back with me in FOUR different positions---1) With me facing the dog 2) With me in Heel Position 3) With me perpendicular and stationary to the dog's right side and 4) With me perpendicular and stationary to the dog's left. #s 3 and 4 are especially handy when close to the Narrows in an bad position.

Movable Obstacle:
Most likely you will be expected to close the gate or replace the obstacle to its original position, so get your dog accustomed to you working and fiddling around behind his back.

Load/Unload:
Do NOT lift the load over the dog's head. That is a sure way to spook them. Other points on the Load/Unload are covered in a different part of this document.

Stay vs Wait:
In a Stay, the dog is not to change position (sit, stand, down) or place. In a Wait the dog may shift out of position (change from a sit to a stand to a stay or whatever), but it cannot move out of place. Changing positions may cause a bobble in the cart, but if the wheels don't turn and move the cart an eenie weenie or a substantial amount, then you are okay. We judges are watching the wheels.

There are only THREE Stays in the Draft Test: the Load and Unload and the Group Stay.

Group Stay:
You may leave your dog in whatever position you feel is most stable for your dog. I prefer the down, as it takes much greater effort for the dog to get up off the ground with all that rigging attached to him. But what is best will be up to you and your dog. Be sure that your dog is comfortable. If, for example, your dog is going to be left in a Down, make sure that a shaft, which will be heavy because of the loaded cart, is not laying on one of his legs.

When "returning to your dog", return in the fashion of Obedience, making the left U-turn around your dog. Do this consistently. This way the dog will know not to get up too early. When I am practicing with other people, I frequently do not release my dog when all the other handlers have released their dogs. This way, my dog knows that the release comes from me and not the other handlers. This is another way of safe guarding your dog breaking too soon.

Actually, the way I do it is as follows. I return to my dog, making that U-Turn left around my dog. When the judge says "Exercise Finished" I softly praise my dog and tell him to WAIT, then I go back to retrieve my leash. I then attach the leash and I do not release my dog until the lead is on. Whatever you choose to do should be like formal Obedience and be consistent.

The Freight Haul:
Make sure that your load is balanced so that the shafts remain parallel to the ground with the cart is loaded. Also make certain that the load is sufficiently bungied down so that the load does not shift.

Practice on all the terrains you can find: grass, unmowed grass, field grass, cedar chips (children's playgrounds), sand (volley ball courts or baseball fields), piles of leaves, roots (...), pavement, gravel, pine cones, as much stuff as you can find.

Hills:
For Novice, hills aren't really an issue. But, you need to develop good hill technique with the low load (20lb) and, even better, on empty.

Down: Way back in the beginning, you will have necessarily taught your dog your "easy" word. This word will be important in carting even if you never set foot in Draft test ring, for even in parades and fun carting in parks, you will have to have a way of slowing down your dog. "Easy" is the key word to descending hills. So practice it first with an empty cart, increasing the weight in slow increments over the weeks, without sacrificing your dog's competent downhill Slow. You may also wish to teach your dog to serpentine or slalom (in great big lazy zig zags) down the hills, so as to diminish the downward force.

A BREECHING HARNESS is very helpful here. The breeching strap is the same as that used with horses. This strap goes around the bum, under the tail, allowing the dog to brake (push backwards) with the the strongest part of his body, the rear quarters. Otherwise, the shoulders of the dog must bear the weight. The breeching strap will greatly help your dog do downhills. Alison Jaskiewicz and/or Marjorie Cottle can help you set up with a breeching harness.

Up: Be sure to gather momentum before doing an ascent. If you are in the group doing the freight haul and the judge is asking that the teams halt so as to ascend the hill one at a time, halt your dog well back of the hill, so that you have lots of distance in between you and the hill to gather momentum. Once on the hill, avoid like the plague, letting your dog slow down much, or far worse, stopping.

Down and Up: Practice very long hills with a gradual pitch. This will develop the stamina and strength in your dog, and you may very well see hills like this in draft tests. Then, you also need to practice short hills with great pitches. At some tests, they say there are "vertical hills", so be prepared.

Conditioning:
Conditioning your dog is like weight training in the gym. You do not work the same muscle groups every day, as the muscles need a day to repair and grow. So, do your Freight Haul every other day, alternating with the Maneuvers. NEVER do your Maneuvers with the cart filled with anything more than a lightweight load, like a blanket.

For Open, you should allow much time to bring the load up to full weight. Only increase the load in small increments, and do it gradually over time. It is most unfair to slap the weights on a dog and expect him to pull competently and safely. Your dog might sustain permanet damage in so doing.

Remember it is "Team Work". Be considerate of your partner and he will be considerate of you.

I probably have left something out. If so, I will post you and fill you in. Hope this helps.

Sara

A Bracing Experience
by Alison Jaskiewicz

At last I have two young (2 1/2 and 4 years) Berners I can work together in Brace Draft. Plus I have a perfect brace hitch cart bought several years ago but seldom used. AND, both Gita and Kepler earned their NDDs last Fall, AND we're taking them to the Specialty in Wisconsin, so . . . . . the adventure begins.

Gita is 4 1/2 inches shorter than Kepler and 30 pounds lighter. Can they become a team?

Step One: Who gets to work on the inside and who on the outside? Well, logic said to me that Gita would be able to see me much better if she were on the inside.

Step Two: Hitch them up and give it a try.

(I actually don't recommend plunging in quite as precipitously as I did. Neither dog had ever pulled this particular cart which has different and unusual shafts which end with a loop over the dogs' heads. If I were to do this over I would take a week or more as necessary to have each dog pull the new cart with weird shafts individually until they were completely comfortable with the equipment. Then and only then would I introduce the new variable - pulling together as a brace.)

Since the Wisconsin Specialty was only four weeks away and I was pretty confident of Gita and Kep's steadiness in harness I did all of the above all at once, and on or close to the day I sent in their brace draft entry. I made a commitment to myself to work them virtually every day in the ensuing four weeks, which I did, as we were also gradually building up the weight they would each pull individually in Open Draft in which they were also both entered. I know, I know, I don't do things by halves . . . . .

Back to Step Two: Hitch Gita and Kep up together. They were good for the separate hitching (the shafts are independent of each other so one dog can be hitched at a time). They were both on leash for safety. I looked down at them, smiled and cheerfully said "Gita, Kep, pull!" Well, pull they did, sometimes one and sometimes the other and occasionally together. They both had their eyes on the loop over their heads half the time. They bumped sideways into each other. And Kep, (remember he was hitched on the outside) did his darndest to pull around in front of Gita to get closer to me! This was a VERY SHORT session!!!!!

Step Three: OK, Kep really wants to be close to me so let's try reversing their positions. Piece of cake! Kep was happy to be close to me and Gita was confident and content to be on the outside. So much for logic. Always listen to your dogs.

Step Four: Turns. Turns are always best introduced in a big wide open space, starting with big broad turns and gradually tightening them. But time was short and my yard is not big and wide open. I did lots of gentle coaxing and encouraging to get the biggest turns I had room for. Several times I simply went back and picked up and pivoted the cart myself and we'd start again. Kep and Gita received HUGE PRAISE when they began a turn to keep them turning and then we'd stop for food jackpot. We got pretty good at halts early on. Halt for food or halt before we ran into a tree or the garden or . . . . . Left turns solidified first. Right turns came slower and in any given session the first right turn is still always the weakest and then they click in for the rest of that session. I'm sure time and experience will cure this also.

Step Five: The narrow area. This was an interesting logistical problem to solve over the four weeks. The Sacco cart is 38 inches wide and thus difficult to judge both sides at the same time relative to passing through a narrow area. My single dog hitch method with narrower carts, telling the dog to wait, backing myself through the narrow area and then calling them through, simply wasn't reliable. For one thing the two dogs didn't always pull evenly and that can quickly be fatal in a narrow area. I settled on working in front of them and taught them to take one step straight forward and halt. This had to be secure enough for them that they would stop on command while I still moved backwards. There could be no appearance of them stopping because they ran into me - a definite no no. We were still fine tuning this days before leaving for Wisconsin.

Step Six: Backing. Well, backing together was what we were aiming for . . . . . Kepler is the more eager backer of the two and he would back quickly until Gita was pulled backwards. Yes, the cart moved back a foot or more as required in the tests, but it wasn't pretty and I don't like to give the judges anything unusual to think about. My goal is teamwork and this definitely did not fit the bill. So I tried asking Kep to wait while I got Gita started backing and then letting him join in. Still not very pretty and the real problem appeared to be that their hind feet were interfering with each other. Kep's solution to that sort of situation is to bully his way through, Gita's is to stop. Hmmmmmm. OK, I had been backing them from in front. Both dogs know how to back at my side hitched or unhitched. Let's try that. Eureka! This they were most comfortable with. Being able to back both ways makes us more versatile in solving unusual maneuvering situations.

Step Seven: Those darned shaft loops. These were a real problem. For the first two weeks both dogs were clearly uncomfortable with the loops over their heads. Gita would get bumped with her loop on halts and many times Kep would duck his head under and behind the loop on halts. They seemed to worry about the loops a lot. Tom and I discussed this extensively and we were on the verge of removing the loops and extending and capping the ends of the shafts when . . . . . I noticed Kep and Gita becoming more comfortable. We decided to take the chance and hope that time would continue to improve their comfort level.

Step Eight: Mileage. This is really what did the trick. The more they worked together and the more they got used to the new cart and weird shafts the more Gita and Kep melded into a team. Each day they worked as a brace we either did a long session of maneuvering or a short session and a mile plus freight haul including practicing control down hills and lots of loops and turns through neighbor's driveways and around trees and rocks in fields. We worked varied terrain: short and long grass, dirt roads, paved roads, a little gravel, even through a few puddles. (Yes, we carted in the rain!) Gita is a devious little bitch and had figured out early on that she could do a slow trot with absolutely no pressure on the traces, letting Kep do ALL the work! Kep, being an eager go getter with more energy than he knows what to do with, couldn't care less. But, you know, as the days and weeks went by Gita chipped in more and more.

We arrived in Wisconsin on Monday but our Draft Test wasn't till Saturday. I think we got in three brace training sessions, and I could feel their teamwork continuing to grow. They were also each out several times with the individual cart to maintain their conditioning for the Open Freight Haul. The heat became an issue through the week and we did shorter and fewer sessions.

Saturday finally arrived. We were up bright and early because the equipment check was moved up to 7AM to try to beat the heat. (Thank goodness for a heavenly brisk breeze off the water every day!) Got the dogs settled in crates in the deep shade. Kepler was the fourth Open Dog and entered the ring at 9:10 AM. Great maneuvering and on to Stays and the Freight Haul. Thankfully the ring was situated so there was always shade for the stays, regardless of the time of day. The Freight Haul hills were small but there were some additional maneuvers to negotiate, a small beach to cross (where Kep gazed longingly at the cool water), and oh the May flies! Not nasty biting black flies which we call May flies here at home, thank goodness. These were half to three quarters of an inch long and did not bite, but rose out of the grass near the lake by the millions (no exaggeration). Amazingly I did not see a single dog all week bothered by all those bugs, but they were enough to drive a person to distraction. (We learned later that the hotel usually sprays for these creatures but had held off knowing the dogs would be there - thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!!!). Bottom line, a successful freight haul and Kepler DD!

Scheduling by random draw landed Gita with the first position in the next group of Open dogs. Quick, unhitch Kep and go get Gita while Tom removes Kep's freight load, and into the ring again. Gita is so easy after Kep who requires constant vigilance especially with so many girl Berners around. Gita is steady on - successful maneuvering. Then we had a break for the last two Open dogs and then Stays and Freight Haul. I usually train my dogs for about ten pounds more than they have to actually pull in a test, but Gita conditions slowly and we had just reached full weight. What a girl! She worked briskly and happily the whole freight haul even ignoring the hotel lunch stand in full swing as we headed back to the ring and, Gita DD!!!!!

Had planned to get Gita and Kep back to the air conditioned room for a while, but lo and behold the breed ring was breaking early for lunch and we had a freestyle demo to do! So a quick change in the portapottie for me and off we went. First Kep, then Gita and then Marjorie Cottle and Addie joined me and Kep for a duet. Dead noon, bright sun. We started the duet. Kep came about six steps with me and turned and headed into the shade of the tent! Enough is enough! A little gentle persuasion and we tried again more successfully. Oh my, we dashed for the air conditioning after that. Novice Brace wasn't scheduled till the very end of the Draft Test, after eleven Novice dogs. Gita and Kepler have already given me so much. Do they have a brace routine left in them?

I think a full hour of total rest and cool did wonders. We walked back to the Draft ring along the lake, a delightful walk we enjoyed many times during Specialty week. Watched the last few Novice dogs and before we knew it we were in the ring just before three. This was it - Brace Novice Draft! Heeling was OK and recall a success. Each dog waited patiently to be harnessed. I hitch Gita first and had Kep's shafts land on my back. Gita jumped and shifted a little but set right back up for me - whew, this had happened once in training too. Took two tries to get Kep into hitching position but once there he was steady. "Are you ready? Forward!" We were off. First halt was fine. First left was great. First right was true to form and very wide but they decided that really was the right way to go. Slow was lovely and moved the obstacle without a hitch. Left to line up for the narrow area. Take your time. Get Kepler's attention, one step forward, get Kepler's attention, one step forward. Gita was tuned in to me, Kep's brain was outside the ring somewhere, but checked in when I asked. Thank you, Kep. Three more step, stops then we were through!!!!!!! Quick right turn was great followed by another wide one into the halt for the back. Successful back by my side, around to the left to drop off the load and then weave to the end. We did it!!!!!! BIG teary hugs for both Gita and Kepler.

The second brace did a great job too. Into the ring for stays. During the three minutes it occurred to

me I had never done a stay with the brace. Too late to practice now. The grass was nice and cool and they were hot and unlikely to try to move out of the shade. On to the Freight Haul. Some of the maneuvering was distinctly tighter with the wide cart. We took our time and made it through. Back into the ring. Gita DD BNDD and Kepler DD BNDD!!!! All in one day!!! What a pair of puppies!!!!!! And they really were a TEAM that day. Many people commented about how well they worked together and almost no one about their difference in size.

Huge thanks to Tom who was my pit crew for the day, having the carts where they needed to be and loading and unloading freight haul loads at the right time for the right dog. You freed me up to concentrate on the puppies. And thanks too for all the ringside support. What a great audience all day, clapping for each little success. I honestly can't think of a better way to spend a day at a Specialty than at the Draft ring with all those terrific working dogs and the people who love them.

Email from Sara Steele:

Question: If I wanted to set up my yard to look like the course we had at the spring fun day where would I go about getting the items used. They did look handmade, especially the large wooden cutout Berners! I was hoping to purchase the items from somewhere.

Answer: There is nowhere to purchase draft test props, as they are handmade by volunteers. You can set up a plain draft maneuvers course very simply by setting out those little orange soccer cones. I think that there are places where you can order bigger orange cones, but I dont know where. Check the dog supply magazines or obedience supply catalogs. But, you can be creative, like in a real draft test, and collect odds and end from around your place or your attic or your garage. If you have any of those milkcans, they are frequently used in draft tests. But use anything at all: garbage cans, wastebaskets, pots of flowers, pumpkins, bales of straw. All that is required of a marker is that it be of sufficient height to be easily visible to the dog and handler, judge, and spectators. Have some fun with this. Create your own "theme" for a draft test: spring, fall, summer, winter, Swiss, America, vacation, anything. But you are still okay being plain and using those little soccer cones. They are available in the Soccer Dept at sports stores.

For the Movable Obstacle, you can do it two ways, and you should practice with both of these, as you will see them both:

a) Cart: You frequently see a cart or other vehicle in draft tests. So, if you have a spare cart, use it. If not, use a kid's wagon or tricycle or little tractor or automobile or truck or use a wheelbarrow or anything like that. If it is light weight enough, it need not have wheels.

b) Gate: You see a lot of "gates" in draft tests. Take two lawn or folding chairs and set them apart (wider than the Narrows). Lay a board or a broom or bar jump bar across them. Pretend this assembly is a gate. Practice halting and staying your dog. Open the gate (remove the board or broom or bar). Go thru the two chairs with your dog. Halt and stay your dog on the other side. Replace the board or broom.

Narrows:
For starts, just set up a "chute." Get two large boards, at least 4 feet long. Get at least 8 cement blocks. Support these boards with them, 2 blocks at each end of each board. If you feel that you can do this and maintain stability, stack 3 blocks at each

end. This means that you will need 12 cement blocks. Set it up so that the boards are the prescribed distance apart, 12 inches wider than the widest part of your cart.

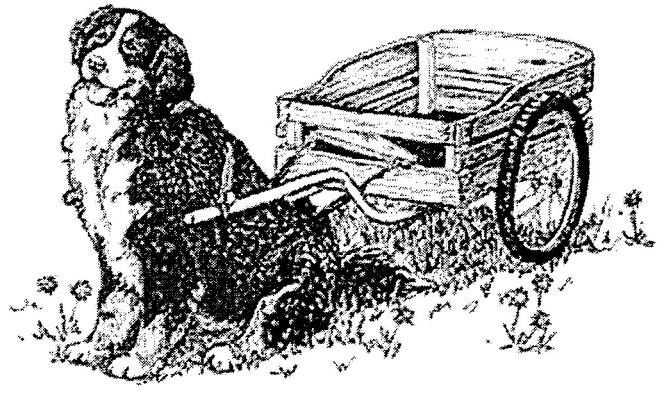
It is handy to have this chute for general practice. It is a terrific way to practice backing (MINUS the cart.)

You can also use an Obedience Broad Jump. I use this lots when I am driving to parks to practice. You can set up several lengths of broad jumps in succession and thus create a very long Narrows with which to hone your skills. BUT KEEP IN MIND, that you will still need to practice a Narrows that has HIGHER sides, at least now and then.

If you feel ambitious, then you can build a "Narrows." Purchase two single lengths (sections) of wooden fencing. Build supports for them to hold them up. If needed, drill holes in the base of the supports in which to pound large tent stakes for stability or windy days. This type of Narrows is commonly seen in draft tests. You can also make Narrows out of PVC fencing. If you want the Narrows to look real and want to preserve it from the elements, paint it white.

NOTE: Practice the Narrows "narrower" than it should be.

Resources



DRAFT WORKSHOP – RESOURCES **May 2005**

1. Wilczek Woodworks
   1786 Broomstick Hill Rd.
   Littleton, NH 03561
   http://www.wilczekwoodworks.com

2. Dog Works
   14356 Curvin Drive
   Stewartstown, PA 17363
   1-800-787-2788
   digwirjs@cyberia.com
   http://www.dogworks.com

3. Ikon Outfitters
   608-592-4397
   http://www.ikonoutfitters.com/

4. Nordkyn Outfitters
   http://www.nordkyn.com/

5. Another great site for those interested in drafting. It has lots of links.
   http://www.cartingwithyourdog.com/

Books

Newfoundland Draft Work – A Guide for Training by Consie Powell

Fun with Draft – Canine Training Workbook by Phil Chagnon & Lea Doane

BMDCA Draft Test Regulations – June 2003 Edition

Breed clubs

Berners
http://www.bmdca.org/pages/working.htm

Swissies
http://www.gsmdca.org/draft_page.htm

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Northern California

11 March 2007

"FIRST DRAFT"
Introduction to Draft Work

WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in draft work and canine carting. This "FIRST DRAFT" Manual was designed to introduce you to the exciting world of Draft Work. We will first guide you through a brief history of canine carting in an effort to understand its origins, and how we might apply draft work today. We will then take you step-by-step through everything you need to get started, from preparing you and your dog for draft work to learning about the different types of equipment. Our Draft Committee has assembled a wealth of information including resources for equipment, books, videos and websites. We hope that this will pique your interest in Draft Work and provide you with everything you'll need to take the next step - one of our "Draft Seminars" where we will work hands-on with you to build a happy working draft team.

We will be scheduling a few "Draft Seminars" later in the year. If you are interested in keeping posted on our schedule, please contact me and I will include you on our mailing list. We will also alert you to opportunities to steward at Draft Tests, which is a great way to observe up close and personal teams working with a variety of apparatus. We will also keep you apprized of any other seminars or Draft Matches we have so you can get in some valuable practice with numerous people experienced with Draft Work. You can reach me either at work , home , or by E-mail at drafting@norcalbernese.org. You can also keep up to date on all our events by visiting the BMDCNC website at www.norcalbernese.org . Wherever we end up getting together, you can be assured that we'll have a lot of fun!

Thank you for your interest in Draft Work and developing the working instincts inherent in your dog. We will make this as fun and educational as possible, for both you *and* your dog.

I look forward to seeing you all working soon!

Happy Carting,

Jim Maxwell
Draft Work Committee Co-Chair

Larry Bohlig & Fred Helmbold, Co-Chairs

Cindy Beckman
President

Mireille Kennedy
Vice President

Judith Lambton
Secretary

Pat Bishop
Treasurer

Board Members
Dwayne Adams
Marie Cushen
Cynthia Hilton
Jim Oberg
Mike Whalen

"FIRST DRAFT"

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A Brief History of Carting

The Bernese Mountain Dog is a working breed originally developed in the region of Bern, Switzerland. Berners (as they are commonly known) were originally used as farm dogs--guarding and driving cattle, and pulling milk and cheese carts to and from market. Their Swiss name, Berner Sennenhund, underscores the breed's working traditions. A "Senn" or "Senner" is the stockman who takes the cattle to the Alps in the summer and stays with them, milking them, caring for them, and making cheese. The Sennenhund is the dog accompanying the Senner on his Alpine journeys, from farm, to field, and to town.

In addition to Bernese, many breeds have been used throughout history in a similar capacity. Such breeds as Newfoundland, Greater Swiss, and other breeds have traditionally been used as draft dogs. Many of the northern and arctic breeds were bred specifically for pulling sleds over the frozen tundra. Today, these jobs have mostly all been replaced by more modern means of transportation.

But the natural instinct and ability lies waiting in each of our dogs, ready to be awakened with the command to pull. Our working dogs are happiest when doing anything with his master. Carting and sledding are perfect activities to accomplish this and have fun at the same time. Besides the obvious benefits to heart and lungs for both you and your dogs, draft work can be both fun and useful. Your child can use the dog and cart to help on his newspaper route. You can have him pull the groceries home. In the country, he can haul fire wood back to the house, or in the suburbs he can help out in the yard or haul the garbage out to the curb. What better publicity for your breed of dog than seeing a well trained team in a parade or at special events? For those interested in Therapy Work, a dog pulling a cart or wagon full of toys through a children's hospital will result in many happy smiles. Sled dog teams can be registered with local police departments to help transport people and supplies. What better reasons could you have for training your dog for draft work in today's world?

Basic Requirements for You and Your Dog

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

Until obedience trained and ready, do not harness your dog to any apparatus. Some pups can be harnessed and instinctively know how to pull without being frightened, however, this is rare. Most must be introduced to the harness and then slowly introduced to any apparatus. Common sense must be the byword for this very special endeavor. Don't assume that your dog will leap at the chance to do draft work. The chances are that he will more than likely "leap" desperately in the opposite direction to start. By introducing your dog in small, fun stages, you will develop a happy working dog.

OBEDIENCE TRAINING AND BASIC CONTROL:

Your dog should be able to complete the AKC Companion Dog (CD) routine plus a few extra commands. To enter a BMD sanctioned Draft Test, you will have to pass a Basic Control portion at the start of the test, proving that your dog is obedience trained. Your dog must be able to heel through a course, change speeds, stop, sit, stay, and come on recall. Your dog must also not react to distractions such as other animals, noises, or people. You must have total voice control. And since you are a team, your dog must be confident that the commands you give will guide him safely through.

WORK WITH A MATURE DOG:

An immature dog who has not finished growing can injure bones, joints and other body structures. The BMDCA has determined that dogs less than two years old cannot compete in draft tests. While you can and should start training your puppy when young, don't force the immature dog to pull a load or work too long. You can start by putting a lightweight harness on your dog first, then slowly introducing him to traces, drags, and shafts. Only you can make the decision when your dog is mature enough and you must keep his health and well being in mind throughout every step of the training process.

HEALTH AND CONDITIONING:

Carting, sledding and draft work is a sport, and as such, place very physical demands on your dog. Your dog must be in top physical condition. Toe nails must be short. His diet must be of high quality and well balanced. The stresses placed on the dog mentally as well as physically may require a higher intake than normal. This doesn't mean over feed your dog. Obesity is the worst enemy of the working dog. As with any training, you need to progress slowly, building both strength and endurance. Don't put your dog in front of a cart for the first time and then expect him to pull it in a parade for two hours the following weekend. While he might be willing to do it to please you, the next time the harness comes out he won't be so eager. A healthy and well conditioned dog will happily take on any new challenge, be it a steep hill or a heavy load.

TEAMWORK AND SAFETY:

You are about to team up with your dog to do something that is potentially hazardous. A dog that is harnessed to an apparatus that becomes frightened or out of control can be injured or killed. Again, there is no such thing as too much obedience training. As the leader of the team, all your training instincts must be in use while working with your dog. You must be aware of your surroundings and alert to any distractions or dangers. You must be alert to your dog's posture and his attitude. When you have him in harness, and he is trying hard but unable to accomplish what you have asked him to do, STOP. Is the load too heavy? Is the weather too warm? Is the harness chafing or cutting into him? You must determine the problem and solve it in such a way that he still has confidence in his own abilities.

Remember, if you want to be part of a good draft team, MAKE IT FUN!

ANATOMY AND DRAFT WORK:

The structure of your dog is very important in doing draft work. Your dog should be in good health, checked for congenital hip, elbow and shoulder problems, and be properly conditioned. Since harnesses typically provide drive to the cart as the dog pushes against a strap across his chest, the drive from his rear legs must travel the length of his body. A solid topline is most important for this transfer. You will also want to analyze your dogs skeletal and muscular structure before deciding on the type of apparatus and carting that would be right for him. Berners are particularly well suited for slower, plodding draft work. Rottweilers move more quickly and have a slightly different angulation, making them better at carting at a fast pace. By understanding what type of work is best for your dog's structure, you will make it easier for him to learn and feel confident in his abilities.

Draft & Carting Terminology

TYPES OF DRAFT WORK:

"Draft Work" refers to an activity where a dog is pulling something - a cart, a wagon, a sled, or even a log. "Carting" refers to an activity where a dog pulls a wheeled vehicle. "Driving" refers to carting activity where the person controlling the dog rides in the vehicle being pulled. "Sledding" is an activity where a dog, or team of dogs, pulls a dog sled or toboggan. While carting and sledding share some basic principles, they differ in that they cannot be backed up without assistance.

TYPES OF APPARATUS:

Cart: A two-wheeled vehicle. These may be used to haul freight, while some styles are designed to carry passengers, like a harness racing sulky. Since the dog bears the weight of the cargo (be it freight or passengers), care must be taken to properly balance the load. A well balanced cart should apply little or no pressure on the dog. A two-wheeled cart is the most maneuverable type of apparatus and is the most commonly used at Draft Tests.

Wagon: A four-wheeled vehicle. These may carry freight or passengers, and have a greater capacity than a cart, usually. The big advantage to a wagon is that the weight is supported entirely by the vehicle. No weight is pressing down on the dog. It is relatively easy to make a dog-drawn wagon from a child's wagon. Wagons should have a rack and pinion steering system (similar to your car) to keep from tipping over in tight turns.

Sled: A sled is a vehicle on runners used for transportation. It may also have a solid bottom such as a toboggan. It is usually used on snow or ice.

Travois: A Travois is a primitive vehicle originally used by the Plains Indians consisting of two trailing poles serving as shafts and bearing a platform or net for the load. Modern travois are often made of wood or aluminum. These are useful when crossing rough terrain and are great for hauling brush, leaves, etc. around the yard.

TYPES OF HARNESSES:

A harness is a series of straps that attach a dog to the apparatus. The straps can be of vinyl webbing or leather, and should be well padded at any pressure points. The attached "Harness Anatomy" by Dog Works gives a clear description of the different elements which make up a harness and how it is attached to a cart or wagon. There are several different styles of harness including Parade Harness, Siwash Harness, and Draft Harness. Use of one style over another is often a matter of personal preference. There are also an infinite number of variations on the different types of harnesses. The most important part of the harness is that it fits comfortably and transfers the dogs drive smoothly without hindering motion.

Parade Harness: A parade harness consists of a padded strap that goes across the withers and circles the dog's chest, and a second padded strap that wraps around the front of the dog across the forechest. The straps could be leather or nylon webbing, and they are often buckled together. Some find this style of harness may constrict the free motion of the dog's shoulders or legs.

Siwash Harness: A Siwash harness looks more like a sled dog harness, with a series of straps crossing the dogs back, between two straps that extend past the rear of the dog, parallel to the ground. The dog's head comes out through a padded chest strap that follows down the breastbone and back through the front legs. A girth strap band provides the connection point for the cart shafts. Dogs have free range of shoulder and leg motion in this type of harness, and most can generate lots of pulling power as a result. Most racing and freight pulling harnesses are variations of the Siwash.

Draft Harness: A Draft harness resembles the draft rigs normally seen on horses. A large padded collar provides the main pull, allowing the dog free should and leg motion while allowing the dog to lean into the collar with shoulders and breastbone to increase pulling force as needed. A belly strap provides the shaft connection point, while the traces run back from the collar to the cart. This style of harness is typically made of leather.

DRAFT TEST ELEMENTS:

Draft Tests are designed to test the teamwork between you and your dog over a series of exercises that demonstrate both inherent ability and training. The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America offers titles to teams passing the tests, both as Novice Draft Dog and open Draft Dog. Many other breed clubs offer similar tests. For the BMD Draft Test, the team must pass ten test elements which include Basic Control; Harness and Hitch; Practical Draft Work that demonstrates an overall working ability while pulling a draft rig; Group Stay while hitched; and a Distance Freight Haul that traverses a half mile course with loaded rigs. N.D.D. teams must perform the test on leash (no corrections allowed) and must pull 20 lbs. in the Freight Haul. D.D. teams perform all exercises off-leash and must pull their own weight (to the nearest 10 lbs.) in the Freight Haul. In both tests the dog must also show a willingness and enjoyment of his work in combination with controlled teamwork. All portions of the test are graded on a pass/fail basis. Attached is a sample Judges scoring sheet which identifies the elements of each exercise in more detail. For more specific information refer to the BMDCA Draft test Rules and Regulations.

During a Draft Test you may not use any bait, toys, or clickers as incentive. You may use as much encouragement, clapping, and verbal praise as necessary to let your dog know that he's doing great! A very important part of passing a test is not just the practice prior to the event, but also that you are mentally prepared, relaxed, and ready to have fun. Dogs can always pick up on their handlers mood, so you want him to know that you are confident and ready to pass the test.
Regardless of the outcome, always praise your dog in the ring, and if at first you don't succeed... try it again with more gusto!

BMDCA DRAFT TEST - JUDGE'S WORKSHEET

SPONSOR: _____ SITE: _____ DATE: _____

CLASS: _____ BREED: _____ TEAM NO. _____

BASIC CONTROL Heeling
Ch. 3 Sec. 1a

Are you ready? Forward, Slow, Fast, Normal, Right turn, Left turn, About turn, Halt, Exercise finished.

☐ Dog does not heel within arms' reach. ☐ No change of pace.
☐ Handler adapts to pace of dog. ☐ Leash guidance/handler physically guides dog.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

Recall
Ch. 3 Sec. 1b

Are you ready? Leave your dog, Call your dog, Exercise finished.

☐ Handler gives more than one "wait" command. ☐ Dog does not "wait."
☐ Dog does not come on first command. ☐ Dog does not come directly to handler.
☐ Dog remains out of reach. ☐ Handler physically guides dog.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

HARNESS & HITCH
Ch. 3 Sec. 2

Are you ready? Harness your dog, *(Back your dog - travois or sled),* ***Hitch your dog, Exercise finished.***

☐ Dog is uncooperative/resists harnessing or hitching. ☐ Dog does not "wait" while rig brought into ring. *(Open)*
☐ Dog is incorrectly harnessed or hitched. ☐ Rough handling of dog.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

PRACTICAL DRAFT WORK Basic Command
Ch. 3 Sec. 3a

Forward, Slow, Normal, Halt, Back your dog.

☐ No halt. ☐ No slow. ☐ Dog upsets rig.
☐ Dog does not back required distance in 1 min. ☐ Dog substantially changes direction while backing.
☐ Excessive "hovering" to force "back-up" ☐ Leash guidance/handler physically guides dog/rig.
☐ Other: *(Handler adapts to dogs pace. Brace team veers to one side. Dog collides with handler on halt.)*
☐ Comments: **P / F**

Control with Distractions
Ch. 3 Sec. 3b

☐ Dog changes direction in response to distraction. ☐ Dog refuses to resume exercise. ☐ Dog upsets rig.
☐ Dog chases or is fearful of distraction. ☐ Moves stationary draft rig in response to distraction.
☐ Dog gives failing performance in response to naturally occurring distraction ☐ Dog barks out of control or shows aggression.
☐ Leash guidance/handler physically guides dog/rig.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

Loading & Unloading
Ch. 3 Sec. 3c

Halt, Load your draft rig, Forward, Halt, Unload your draft rig.

☐ Dog does not halt on command. ☐ Dog does not stay. ☐ Dog upsets rig.
☐ Does not cooperate for loading/unloading. ☐ Dog refuses to pull loaded rig.
☐ Does not stay in position when greeted/patted. ☐ Load falls out of rig.
☐ Aggression/shyness when greeted/patted. ☐ Leash guidance/handler physically guides dog/rig.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

Maneuvering
Ch. 3 Sec. 3d

Narrows
Ch. 3 Sec. 3d.c

Moveable Obstacle
Ch. 3 Sec. 3d.d

May include: ***Right turn, Left turn, U-turn, Circle right, Circle left, Weave.***

☐ All maneuvers are not executed. ☐ Dog upsets draft rig.
☐ Contact by dog/handler/rig with any obstacle. ☐ Leash guidance/handler physically guides dog/rig.
☐ Contact by dog/handler/draft rig with narrows. ☐ Dog/handler/rig does not go through narrows.

Halt, Remove the obstacle, Forward *(Halt, Replace the obstacle - optional).*

☐ Does not wait while obstacle is removed/replaced. ☐ Handler does not replace obstacle (if required).
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

3 Minute GROUP STAY
Ch. 3 Sec. 4

Position your dogs for the stay, Leave your dogs, Return to your dogs, Exercise finished. *(Open stay - out of sight).*

☐ Handler gives more than one "stay" command. ☐ Dog moves out of place.
☐ Dog changes position *(e.g. from down to sit or stand).* ☐ Dog barks or whines repeatedly.
☐ Dog incorrectly harnessed/hitched. ☐ Rough placement of dog.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

DISTANCE FREIGHT HAUL
Ch. 3 Sec. 5

☐ Load significantly unbalanced when moving. ☐ Dog upsets draft rig.
☐ Freight load exceeds dog's pulling capacity. ☐ Dog refuses to move loaded rig/accompany handler.
☐ Team does not complete the course. ☐ Dog/rig collides with object. ☐ Leash guidance.
☐ Dog is incorrectly harnessed/hitched. ☐ Physical guidance of dog/rig without judge approval.
☐ Other / Comments: **P / F**

Other

☐ Aggression. ☐ Fear. ☐ Uncontrolled behavior. ☐ Fouling ring or freight haul.
☐ Food/toys carried/offered during test. ☐ Dog leaves ring. **P / F**

TOTAL PERFORMANCE: **P / F**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Judge's signature

Getting Started

FITTING YOUR DOG FOR A HARNESS:

Once you have decided what type of apparatus and harness is right for you, you need to get a harness. If you are starting out with a puppy, an adjustable harness is the best. Once your dog is mature, he can be fitted with the harness you have decided on. When fitting a harness it is vital that you feel your dogs bone structure, to make sure that the harness is applying pressure at the right spots. The actual fitting and measurements you may have to take will vary with the type of harness you have chosen, but typically you will have to locate your dogs breastbone and withers. The breastbone is exactly what it sounds like, and is located along the front of your dog's chest. The withers is where the shoulder blades come together, at the top of the dog's back, before the neck. To locate both of these you will need to visualize your dogs skeletal structure and feel under his coat. This is much easier to do on the short-haired breeds. Ultimately, if you follow the manufacturers instructions you should end up with a harness that is well fitted to your dog.

INTRODUCING YOUR DOG TO HIS HARNESS

In this package you will find a page titled "So...Your Dog Wants to Pull!" by Dog Works. This step-by-step method of slowly introducing your dog to a harness and eventually a cart will create a happy working dog. If you have played "dress up" with your dog or he is already use to a harness, this step will be simple. If this is the first time in a harness for your dog, follow the steps slowly, and don't be afraid to go back a few if you run into problems. When you get the harness, let your dog sniff it, give him a treat, tell him what a beautiful harness it is and how handsome he will be when he has it on. Once he is comfortable putting it on and wearing it, slowly extend the time he wears it and do something fun with your dog – but preferably not "rough housing" – you want him having fun, but also stay in control. If your dog is motivated by food, put the harness on to feed him. As soon as you remove the harness, end the praise. Pretty soon the dog will get the idea that when the harness goes on, the fun begins. Never leave your dog alone with the harness on, as it could accidentally get caught and any traumatic experience will mean starting all over again. The goal is to have your dog wagging his tail every time he sees the harness, and to build on that happy attitude through the entire training process.

In our "First Draft" training seminars, we follow this same, slow, methodical process to work up to eventually pulling a cart or wagon. By progressing in small steps, your dog will gain in confidence along the way, and so will you as you see your dog's inherent abilities emerge as you become a happy working team.

BASIC COMMANDS

You can start teaching your puppy or dog the basic commands at any time and incorporate them into your daily play and walks. Working through the commands in harness will also help reinforce that when the harness is on its time to work, and that working is FUN! The following list is an overview of the many commands that are used in draft work. You'll have to pick the ones that best suit your needs. The most important thing is that you use the commands consistently and in an encouraging way.

LET'S GO, PULL, FORWARD, HIKE, ALL RIGHT, MUSH OKAY	All are forward commands, varying according to handler preference
RIGHT, GEE	Turn right (Gee, you're right!)
LEFT, HAW	Turn left
HARD-RIGHT or -LEFT	Tight turn, sidestepping
STEP	Take one step forward
STEP-RIGHT or -LEFT, COME-GEE or -HAW	Sidestep right or left, usually towards handler
EASY, SLOW	All mean go slower
HURRY, HURRY-UP, FAST	All mean go faster
WHOA, STOP, HOLD, HALT	All mean stop.
BACK	Back-up
ON-BY, LEAVE-IT, IGNORE, NEVER-MIND	Used when you want your dog to continue past some distraction that has caught his attention.
GEE-OVER! or HAW -OVER!	For use when on opposite side of dog (on right and want to go left) but usually used while backing up

RESOURCES

Carting and Draft Work Breed Clubs

Carting Books, Pamphlets and Videos

Canine Carting and Related Websites

Carting Equipment Vendors and Manufacturers

Articles:

Carting from A to Z
DOG WORLD Magazine May 1992

Carts provide exercise for dogs
Oregonian Excerpted by Canine Carriages

DOGS AT WORK! 1998 BMD National Specialty
Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley

Drafting and driving are fun and useful
DOG FANCY Magazine June 1996

How to turn a child's wagon into a dog cart
DOG FANCY Magazine May 1992

Parades - Tips to make sure you have fun...safely
Excerpts from Warrick Wilsons "Carting With Your Dog"

BMDCA Draft Test Rules and Regulations
Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America
June 2003 Edition

Carting and Draft Work Clubs

The following lists of clubs all promote carting, drafting, and other working activities for their specific breeds. You may want to contact them to find out about activities specific to your breed.

Alaskan Malamute Club of America, Inc.
Working Dog Committee Chair:
Helen Schultz
E7625 Troy Village Rd
Spring Green, WI 53588
Phone: 608-558-9317 (cell)
Email: wdc@alaskanmalamute.org
http://www.alaskanmalamute.org/

American Bouvier des Flandres Club, Inc.
Carting Chair: Julie Cramer
Email: glsark9@msn.com
http://www.bouvier.org/

American Working Collie Association
President, Jean Levitt
208 Harris Rd. FA 1
Bedford Hills, NY 10507
Phone: 914-241-7094
West Coast Director, Megan Loe
Email: mkloe@tgi.net
http://www.awca.net/

American Rottweiler Club
Carting Test Coordinator:
Dr. Tommy Caisango
1635 Rustic Way
Melbourne, FL 32935-4414
Phone: 321-752-4614
Email: DrTom13@aol.com
http://www.amrottclub.org/

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America
Draft Chair: Phil Atkinson
Email: Phil@iwindsurf.com
http://www.bmdca.org

German Shepherd Dog Club of America
Secretary: Sharon R. Allbright
P.O. Box 429
Applegate, CA 95703
Phone: 530-878-2826
Email: sharlen@foothill.net
http://www.gsdca.org/

Great Pyrenees Club of America
Versatility/Draft Dog Chair:
Christine Palmer-Persen
Phone: 707-838-8587
Email: pyrcreek@aol.com
http://clubs.akc.org/gpca/

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America
Draft Chair: Steve Likevich
Email: twinpine@mindspring.com
http://www.gsmdca.org/

National Entlebucher Mountain Dog Association
Board Member: Leelee Stefanki
Email: chinook@napanet.net
http://www.nemda.org/

Newfoundland Club of America
Working Dog Committee Chair:
Cheryl M. Dondino
20600 SW Johnson St
Aloha, OR 97006-1838
Phone: 503-591-9187
Email: cmd555@aol.com
http://www.newfdogclub.org/

Saint Bernard Club of America (SBCA)
Working Dog Committee:
Larry Jech
11446 West Hidalgo Ave.
Tolleson AZ 85353
Phone: 602-936-9120
Email: jech.saints@juno.com
http://www.saintbernardclub.org/

Siberian Husky Club of America, Inc.
Corresponding Secretary:
Julia Rylander
Email: SHCAinfo@msn.com
http://www.shca.org/index.shtml

Carting Books, Pamphlets and Videos

An Introduction to Canine Carting

Video by Beth Ostrander, 1 hour
Available from Dog Works

- A great training video, thoughtfully produced, with step by step instructions on training, and a good chance to see these methods being applied. Also covers a little about types of carts and wagons.

The Cart Book with Plans and Projects

William L. Sullivan, copyright 1983
TAB Books Blue Ridge, Summit Pa, 17214
ISBN 0-8306-1512-1

- This book is out of print but is still available. Most cart projects are for use with bicycle or human power, but some can be adapted to dog power. Includes one set of plans for a canine sulky cart.

Child's Wood Wagon Plan

The New Yankee Workshop
Norm Abrams, Master Craftsman
The New Yankee Workshop
P.O. Box 9345
So. Burlington, VT 05407-9345
Phone: 800-892-0110 (24 hrs./7 days a week)

- A great plan and materials list which you can easily adapt for draft work (Note: does not have rack & pinion steering so is subject to tipping on tight corners... just like those old Radio Flyers).

Dog Cart Training

von Russ Giants, c/o Harry Russ
123 Yeager Ave. Forty Fort, Pa. USA 18704-4031.
Email dogcartman@JUNO.COM
Phone is 717-288-0735.

- The Training Manual is $8.00 plus s&h, published in 1992. Harry used to make fantastic custom carts, but has recently retired.

Draft Equipment Guide:

Newfoundland Club of America Working Dog Committee
Obtainable from their Publications Secretary (and Dog Works)

- A pamphlet that covers equipment, favorite cart and wagon plans, training tips, and instructions and diagrams for harnesses and backpacks. Informal but very comprehensive.

Dog Driver: A Guide for the Serious Musher

Mike and Judy Collins, 385 pages, hard cover, $28.95
Available from WorkingDogs.com

Draft/Carting Rules & Regulations:

American Working Collie Association Carting Program
Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Draft Test Regulations
New Foundland Club of America Draft Test Regulations
New Foundland Club of America Cart & Wagon Exercises
North American Working Bouvier Association Carting Regulations
Saint Bernard Club of America Draft Test Regulations

- All available through the National Breed Clubs

The Joy of Running Sled Dogs

Noel K. Flanders, 107 pages, soft cover
New and used copies available from Amazon.com starting at $6.23

- Thoughtful and thorough basic instruction.

Linda Franklin's Notebook on Cart Training

Linda Franklin, 44W431 RT.64, Maple Park, IL 60151-8552.
Phone: 708-365-9194.

- She has a cart training notebook that is wonderful and trains with driving in mind. She'll mail it for about $30.00. Check with her first.

Newfoundland Draft Work: A Guide for Training

By Consie Powell
Available from Dog Works Inc. (and others)

- An invaluable guide to training, equipment and team work.

My Dog Likes To Run, I Like To Ride

Daphne Lewis, $20.00
Available from Amazon.com and other on-line retailers.

- "Scootering" with your dog for exercise and building teamwork.

Sled Dog Bulletin: Building a Taining Cart

Raymond Thompson Company
15815 2nd Place West
Lynwood, WA 98037

- Plans and specifiactions on building a training cart for sled dogs, as well as some cart variations more applicable to draft work.

Note that inclusion in this list does NOT represent an endorsement of the books, pamphlets and videos or their content by BMDCNC in any way.
This list is provided strictly as an information service.

Carting Equipment Vendors and Manufacturers

Alpine Outfitters
P.O. Box 1728
Marysville, WA 98270
Phone: 360-659-3800
http://www.alpineoutfitters.net/

Sleds, skijoring and trail equipment, packs.

Black Ice
3620 Yancy Avenue
New Germany, Minnesota 55367
Phone: 320- 485-4825
http://www.blackicedogsledding.com/

Dog Sleds and training rigs.

DogScooter.com
Daphne Lewis
Federal Way, Washington
Phone: 253-839-1502
http://www.dogscooter.com/index.html

Dog scooters, carts, sulkies, harnesses, gear books and videos.

Dog Works Inc.
Beth Ostrander
Stewartstown, PA
Phone: 800-787-2788
Fax: 717-993-3698
http://www.dogworks.com/

Beth's "Intro to Canine Carting" video, lots of carts, wagons, harnesses, equipment, books and knowledge - one stop shopping for all your draft wok needs.

Graham Carriage Works
14699 S. Plum Drive
Oregon City, OR 97045
Phone: 503-656-0102
http://www.pacifier.com/~carriage/

Custom sulky type carts with unique ergonomic design.

Hall Sleds and Rigs
5875 McCrum Road
Jackson, Michigan 49201
Phone: 517-782-1786
http://www.hallssleds.com/

Frank Hall's dog sleds, training rigs, harnesses, books and videos.

Ikon Outfitters, Ltd.
7597 Latham Road
Lodi, WI 53555-9526
Phone: 608-592-4397
http://www.ikonoutfitters.com/

Harnesses, backpacks, sledding and carting equipment.

Jalynn Kennels
Lynda and Al McFadden
Box 70, R.R. #3
Creemore, Otario, L0M 1G0
Phone: 705-466-2099
E-mail: newfdog@bconnex.net

Custom aluminum carts.

K-9 SULKYS
10172 Gilbert Street
Anaheim, California 92804
Phone/fax: 714-758-9906
http://www.rott-n-chatter.com/k-9sulkys/

K-9 Sulkys developed and designed for the comfort and safety of your dog.

Konari Outfitters
52 Seymour Street
Middlebury, VT 05753
Phone: 802-388-7447

Dog sleds and pulks, harnesses, books and sledding gear.

Lilawasta Dog Cart
California
Email: carts@dogcarts.com
http://www.dogcarts.com

Rugged cart in two sizes, three colors, plus harnesses. They also make a double brace cart.

Mountainsmith
18301 West Colfax Building P
Golden, CO, 80401
Phone: 800-551-5889
http://www.mountainsmith.com/msmith.html

Skier and backpacker gear, but also dog backpacks and "trippin" gear (and of course, home of Coor's beer).

Miniature Wagons by Walter Neugent
6 Charles Ave.
Westerly, RI USA 02891
Phone: 401-596-7507

Wood Parade Cart and a Training Cart. You can get custom versions built.

Moriah Company
9595 N. 6800 W.
Tremonton, UT 84337-8605
Phone: 435-257-2570
http://www.LeatherLeashes.com

Offers the finest in handmade leather canine goods. Included in their product list is a full line of leather leads and harnesses, including carting harnesses.

New England Draft Adventures
Shiela Blanker/ Kathy Barry
456 Mt. Hermon Station Rd.
Northfield MA, 01360
Phone: 413-498-4341
Email: StarNewf@aol.com

Books, harnesses, travois, pulks, couplers, drag bars, booties and workshops for the draft dog enthusiast.

Nordkyn Outfitters nordkyn@nordkyn.com
P.O. Box 1023
Graham, WA 98338
Phone: 206-847-4128
Fax: 206-847-4108
http://www.nordkyn.com

The web site features an online catalog, including pictures of carts, prices, and the names of dealers world-wide.

Northern Industries
Toll free 1-800-533-5545
7days a week / 24 hours
http://www.northern-online.com

Source for wagons for the do-it-yourselfer and all the tools you might need.

RedWagons.com
P.O. Box 350040
Elmwood Park, IL 60707
http://www.redwagons.com/

Official on-line retailer for the original "Radio Flyer" red wagons for those looking to build their own wagon.

Schaussi's Alpen Schatz
P.O. Box 786/565 Sherman St, Ste 1A+B
Ridgeway, Colorado 81432 USA
Tel: 970-626-3202
Fax: 509-692-702
Email: info@alpenschatz.com
http://www.alpenschatz.com

Mary Dawn DeBriae imports wonderful handcrafted European leashes, harnesses, and Swiss collars and cowbells.

Tundra
16438 96th Avenue
Nunica, Michigan 49448
Phone: 616-837-9726

Dog wagons, sleds, and training rigs.

Wilczek Woodworks
1786 Broomstick Hill Rd.
Littleton, N.H. 03561
603-444-0824
http://www.wilczekwoodworks.com/

Perhaps the finest crafted wood carts and wagons around, they have taken over from Dog Works in providing wood carts, and are also famous for their antique-style hay wagon.

Note that inclusion in this list does NOT represent an endorsement of the company or its products by BMDCNC in any way. This list is provided strictly as an information service.

Carting from A to Z

Got a potential draft dog? Let him pull his own weight (and a little more)

By Kathy E. Kear

In recent years, dog carting has become an increasingly popular recreational activity for many dog fanciers. Carting—also known as draft work—is nearly as popular as agility in the U.S. and the United Kingdom, according to Jude Simonds' book *The Complete Bernese Mountain Dog*. In Germany and Switzerland many Bernese owners have worked or exhibited their dogs with carts.

While it was once common to see large dogs drawing wheeled vehicles along the roads in countries such as England, Switzerland and Germany, this is a rare sight today. Britain outlawed the pulling of such vehicles by dogs along public roadways in 1885: however, in Belgium, this practice continued on a large scale until about 1939. The money earned there due to dog haulage was estimated to total around $9 million. While a student at Harvard University, Teddy Roosevelt supposedly was transported around Cambridge in a dog cart.

Justin (above) and Sennenhof Hans-Gunnar belong to Wynn MacDonald; the human cargo is Jessica MacDonald. Photos by the owner.

Carts have been used for many purposes over the years. They are easy to build, affordable, efficient, economical to operate and easy to repair. They also serve as wonderful recreational vehicles for demonstrations, carrying small passengers and charity work. According to William Sullivan in *The Cart Book with Plans*

and Projects, two-wheeled carts have always been popular for livestock use, and while the development of two-wheeled carts has been sporadic over the course of history, there has been little change in their design in recent years. Two-wheeled carts in particular enjoyed a resurgence of popularity during the 17th century. Even during Roman times special dog carts—curriculi—were constructed for children to ride in.

Sullivan says the dog was probably the first animal trained to pull in harness "using a netlike mesh around the neck and chest." It is assumed that this first training was to prepare dogs to pull sleds over the ice in temperate countries. In years past, draft dogs were utilized for numerous work purposes by farmers, dairies, weavers, bakers and letter carriers, among others. Bernese Mountain Dogs, Newfoundlands, Bouviers and St. Bernards were among the breeds which were commonly used for such purposes. In World War II the Swiss Army moved food and ammunition across the countryside with the Grosse Schweizer, a breed with magnificent stamina.

The choice of specific breeds for various purposes seemed to be determined by geographical location and need. For instance, the Bernese Mountain Dog was heavily utilized around the middle of the 18th century in the cantons of Switzerland for lightweight hauling, including delivering milk to the cheeseries and carrying baskets to market.

The history behind the development and use of draft dogs has very deep roots. We know that as early as the days of the cave dwellers humans had a relationship with the canine species as helper and friend. During that time, dogs were used primarily for pulling sledges and other forms of transportation such as the travois, which carried a burden between two connected trailing poles. Historical evidence indicates that a device similar to the travois as we know it today may have existed as early as the Ice Age. We have also learned that during Mesolithic times, humans traveled on wooden skis and sleds with wooden runners.

Dogs have to a large extent made Arctic exploration possible by enabling humans to travel through snow and ice. As years passed and people became more settled, dogs progressed to greater responsibilities. Civilization continued to develop, and humans became increasingly dependent upon their canine friends as working partners, using them for draft work, hunting, guarding, rodent control and herding. For the well-to-do, dogs were kept for companions, status symbols, hunting and entertainment (i.e., racing and fighting).

Around the time of the Neolithic revolution, various breeds were scattered along migration routes across the world. The distribution of breeds appeared to depend upon geographical region and related needs. This rudimentary form of selective breeding continued to evolve as communities, cities and countries came into existence and humans adapted to new lifestyles in various areas. In the modern age, dogs have served for the most part as companions and pets, but even today we continue to add to their role of helper by training them to be seeing eye and hearing ear dogs, pet-facilitated therapy dogs and so on.

OUTFITTERS

Newfoundland Novelties
P.O. Box 73
Rheems, PA 17570-0073
(717) 367-8792
(harnesses)

Ikon Outfitters Ltd.
Eva and Frank Ruzicka
7597 Latham Road
Lodi, WI 53555
(608) 592-4397
(Supplies recreational equipment for dogs including carts, harnesses, sleds, packs, etc.)

Nordkyn Outfitters
P.O. Box 1023
Graham, WA 98338-1023
(206) 847-4128
(Supplies recreational equipment for dogs including harnesses, packs, etc.)

Konari Outfitters Ltd.
Ed Blechner
RD 1, Box 441B
Vergennes, VT 05491
(801) 759-2100
(harnesses)

Craig Gilbertson
3106 W. Kalamo Hwy.
Charlotte, MI 48813
(517) 543-4746
(four-wheeled carts)

K-9 Sulkies
Paul Landry
2406 N. Wood Court
Claremont, CA 91711
(714) 621-7511
(two-wheeled carts)

Von Russ Giants
Harry E. Russ Jr.
123 Yeager Ave.
Forty Fort, PA 18704
(717) 288-0735
(two-wheeled box-style carts and harnesses)

In the extreme North, dog pulling is still relied upon fairly heavily for transportation purposes, in addition to being a very popular competitive sport. In Alaska, professional dog sledders compete in 500-mile races for awards that can be more than $10,000. The sledders use a team of dogs which are specifically bred, raised and trained for these events, which include the annual Iditarod Trail sled dog race. The popularity of sled racing has even spread to warmer climates. For example, the Desert Dog Drivers from Tucson, AZ, use teams of Siberian and Alaskan Huskies to race three-wheeled carts, made of steel tubing, on desert roads at speeds as fast as 15 mph.

Before beginning cart training with your dog, one of the first considerations must be equipment requirements. The cart should be sturdy, lightweight and easy to maneuver. Bicycle wheels with pneumatic tires and ball bearings work very well; they turn easily and aren't squeaky.

Dog carts come in a variety of two-wheeled and four-wheeled styles. Some enthusiasts recommend the four-wheeled cart because it is easier to balance a load in, it has more space and, unlike the two-wheeled cart, it can be used with more than one dog. The two-wheeled cart is lighter and therefore harder to balance, but one can be constructed so that this is not a major problem. William Sullivan says the center of gravity in these carts should be slightly in front of the axle; he recommends the two-wheeled "sulley." The sulley he describes in *The Cart Book with Plan and Projects* has room for two small passengers and has a padded seat with storage space underneath. It is very light and rolls with ease. He suggests that the shafts and accompanying ropes elevate as they get closer to the front to facilitate pulling, and that they are long

enough to allow for freedom of movement of the dog's hindquarters when in full stride.

Of equal importance to the cart is the harness, which should be well-fitted and comfortable so that the dog can pull effectively without being rubbed by the straps or having breathing hampered. A chest pad for the front of the harness is a great addition. The harness must be securely attached to the cart; Sullivan suggests that loops be affixed to each side of the harness to hold the shafts at the correct height. He also advises making thimble-type covers for the ends of each shaft which attach to strapping, so that the cart cannot run over the dog. In addition, he highly recommends the use of snaps so that a frightened dog can be freed from the cart quickly if necessary.

Harnesses can be ordered from various vendors or they can be made at home. *The Cart Book With Plans and Projects* provides directions on how to construct a dog harness. While leather looks nice and is extremely durable, it is also expensive and hard to work with, according to Sullivan; he recommends the use of nylon because it is durable, inexpensive and easy to work with.

In Switzerland, there are three types of harnesses in use. The *sielen* (the favorite) is a broad, padded leather strap at least 3.2 inches wide, which rests on the dog's shoulder joint with a strap across the back and another under the chest to maximize pulling power. The *kummet* is a padded ring of wood, iron or leather with two ropes attached to rings, which are attached to a bar (swingle tree). The *kragen*, or collar, is a combination of the above two; the leather widens at the sides with the strap across the back and the ring of the krummet, which encircles the entire shoulder to avoid pressure on the dog's windpipe.

Most trainers agree that a majority of dogs shouldn't be used for regular work until they are at least a year and a half old and developmentally mature. The bones of a puppy are very soft, and making him pull too much before he is physically ready could cause him serious injury; however, it doesn't hurt to get a puppy used to the harness, teach him to lead and familiarize him with a few basic voice commands.

While individual trainers have different methods for cart training their dogs, most agree on the basic points. First, early training should be done in an open area, preferably at home. As the dog gets used to the routine, you can vary the terrain to includes hills, tight turns, bumpy roads and so on. If the dog seems to be frightened or confused at any point during the training process, stop, reassure him and begin again. Be sure to reward him with praise and tidbits. The main goal is for the dog to look forward to this time together so that he will come to enjoy his cart work.

The time required to complete basic cart training varies drastically depending upon the dog. It is important to allow each dog to set his own pace. Practice as often as possible until each step of the training process is completed satisfactorily and both you and your dog are confident before continuing to the next step. Although this requires a great deal of time, patience and careful preparation, reaching your goal will be a wonderful reward.

One training philosophy which is very practical and easy to understand is that of Gale Werth of Broken Oaks Kennel in Madison, WI. Werth owns Bernese Mountain Dogs, has been involved with cart training for a number of years and has written several articles on cart training. She suggests that before beginning cart training, the dog should be taught to "stand—stay," a basic obedience command. By doing so, the dog will learn to stand still during harnessing, hitching and lowering the shafts as well as during unharnessing. Werth suggests using "Let's go" or "Pull" to cue the dog to begin moving out and lean into the traces. "Whoa" should indicate to the dog that he should stop or halt. Backing up can be cued by a one-word command such as "back."

The first step in Werth's training method involves getting a puppy used to the harness by allowing him to wear it until he's comfortable. She suggests using the "stand—stay" command when putting the harness on or taking it off so that the puppy doesn't lie down. She says puppies don't necessarily need their own specially fitted harness as long as what is being used is comfortable and works for the intended purpose. She uses a non-adjustable Husky harness, which basically self-fits, for puppies weighing from 20 to 45 pounds. For adult dogs Werth emphasizes that harnesses should be specifically fitted for each dog (or dogs of equal size) and equipped with additional strap length for growth adjustments.

The next step is to prepare a beginner cart of cardboard boxes. Werth makes holes in the front bottom corners of an 18- by 24-inch box and strings five feet of cord through the holes. She likes cardboard boxes because they are cheap, readily available, make very little noise and give the puppy a sense of something behind him, without running up on him and causing him to panic.

Once he's comfortable with the harness, he should be hitched to the box cart with the box placed five feet behind him. Something lightweight can be placed in the box to reduce bouncing if necessary. Use praise, coaxing and tidbits to encourage the puppy to go forward a few steps while repeating "Pull" or "Let's go." Once the puppy becomes familiar

RESOURCES

Newfoundland Club of America
Consie Powell, land work secretary
Roger Powell, working dog committee
5208 Olive Road
Raleigh, NC 27606
(919) 851-1320
(draft regulations, information packet)

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America
Carol Evert, BMDCA ways and means
221 Greenland Ave.
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
(draft test regulations)

Newfoundland Draft Work: A Guide for Training, Consie Powell, 1987-88. Available from author (address above) for $12.50 postpaid.

Draft Equipment Guide, Roger Powell. Available for $5 from author (address above), Newfoundland Club of America or Nordkyn Outfitters, P.O. Box 1023, Graham, WA 98338-1023; (206) 847-4128

Cart and Sled Training available from Nordkyn Outfitters (address above).

The Cart Book with Plans and Projects, William Sullivan, Tab Books Inc., Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214.

"Draft Dogs," Doris Lendon, *The Alpenhorn* (BMDCA), June 1990 (reprinted from Oasis, Vol. 1, July 1988; originally appeared in the BMDC of Great Britain newsletter, November 1981).

"Carting: Getting Started," Gale Werth, *The Alpenhorn*.

"Carting: A Word of Caution," Gil Evans, *The Alpenhorn*, June 1990.

with the routine, the handler can introduce hills, turns and other distractions, including other animals and children. Werth emphasizes that it is important to give the puppy lots of experience at each stage of training until both the handler and the dog are comfortable with the progress made. If he shows reluctance at any time, back up a bit and start again, after reassuring him.

Once this part has been mastered, the dog can move up to pulling the actual cart. Werth emphasizes three major transitional areas in the change from pulling a line to pulling the cart. The first and most difficult transition involves the shafts, because they restrict movement. Getting the dog used to the shafts is further complicated because they usually aren't removable from the cart. However, Werth created her own set of training shafts by cutting two 4½-foot pieces of flat wooden molding, drilling three holes, each 4 inches apart, toward the same end of each piece of molding, and stringing eight 10-inch pieces of light cord through the holes. The opposite ends of the molding were nailed to a 15-inch section of two-by-four. The molding strips are used as shafts and attached to the harness with the cords by tying the molding to the shaft loops. These shafts can be adjusted by moving the hole closer to or farther away from the molding, which will determine how close the box rides to the dog. Werth suggests beginning with the position farthest back and working your way up as the dog gains confidence. The dog should be worked extensively on turns until he seems completely relaxed with this routine.

The second and third transitions involve the cart itself; the actual cart obviously will weigh more, make more noise and present more of a perceived threat to the dog as it comes up behind him. Before harnessing the dog to the cart, walk him on a level surface along with the cart while a helper pulls the cart, with the dog between it and the handler.

Next, place the dog on a "stand—stay" and drop the shafts over his back several times. Finally, attach the harness to the shafts and slowly drop it to rest on his back. The shafts should again be raised and lowered several times, until the dog doesn't seem to be bothered by them, at which point the harness should be placed over his head without fastening the belly strap. With the harness over his head, the dog should be encouraged to move a few steps forward as the cart is moved along at the same pace by a helper.

Once this is accomplished without incident, fasten the belly strap. The handler should lead the dog forward with the helper moving the cart but not allowing it to run up on the dog. At this point lots of praise, encouragement and food should be used to build his confidence and trust. A long, straight, level area is best for this first attempt; you don't want to try turns until the dog is totally relaxed with the cart moving behind him. Once he is content and relaxed you can dispose of the helper and increase the pace to a trot. Again, if the dog seems upset or aloof at any time, stop and reassure him and begin again.

After this, Werth says, it's simply a matter of adding weight gradually and continuing to practice. She stresses that the time needed to complete this basic training process varies depending upon the dog's willingness to accept each step. Some dogs adapt very readily and others take more time.

For winter recreation and practice, Werth recommends purchasing a child's metal saucer sled and letting the dog pull it. These have hand holds and rounded bottoms which enable them to move in any direction quickly. The saucers are more expen-

sive than the flat plastic sleds, but Werth says they're much more durable. Werth intimates that she has used her saucer for various hauling jobs including wood, children and miscellaneous other small loads. She says it is very important for the person leading the dog to be aware of downhill areas, where stopping could be a problem.

Werth prefers ready-made carts over homemade models; she says she feels they are better balanced and often are made to take apart for storage. She says a cart is well worth the investment because it is a one-time cost and can be sold to another cart enthusiast should you decide to upgrade.

Cart enthusiast Wynn MacDonald of Waverly Hall, GA, has owned Bernese Mountain Dogs for more than six years and has been involved in conformation, obedience and carting. MacDonald's training system is very similar to Werth's. She says she enjoys working with Bernese because they are eager to please and enjoy doing the work they were bred to do. She uses a very attractive and sturdy two-wheeled cart which was designed and constructed by her husband, a professional woodworker.

MacDonald says the training process may take a week or several months, depending upon the dog and his willingness to accept the shafts and the cart; she recommends letting the dog set the pace. She calls love and praise the essential ingredients for training and adds, "It is easier to build confidence than it is to rebuild it after a bad experience."

In his article "Carting: A Word of Caution," Gil Evans suggests attaching a log to the harness, once the dog is used to the harness itself, to give the dog a pulling sensation. This should be done only after introducing the dog to the log and allowing him to investigate it so that he won't be frightened. Evans also suggests allowing the dog to thoroughly familiarize himself with the cart before pulling it up behind him or attaching him to it.

Once the dog is completely comfortable with being harnessed and hitched to the cart and has learned to move forward, Evans recommends walking slowly in large circles (both directions) to accustom the dog to the pressure of the inner shaft and the pull of the outer shaft. He says it is very important for the dog to be fully developed in bone and muscle before pulling weight; the dog's pulling muscles should be built up gradually by adding weight slowly and making certain that it is properly balanced.

Regardless of whether you and your dog are involved in carting for pleasure or competition, there are many creative uses for the dog cart. One Bernese owner who started a pet-sitting business harnessed his dog and decorated his cart with big bows, filling it with packaged pet treats and his business cards. He went to a large shopping center and paraded his dog and cart. The public loved it and showered the dog with loads of attention; he was petted and photographed by children and adults alike. Not only did the public get a good demonstration of one of the uses this breed was intended for, but the pet sitter's clientele increased.

Reasons for the growing interest of fanciers (especially in large breeds) in cart training include the recreational benefits, competitive enjoyment and being able to demonstrate the true working abilities of their dogs. Many breed clubs support draft work by organizing and sponsoring draft matches and official draft tests where titles can be earned. The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America has actively pursued this endeavor in the last several years and held its first official draft test last September in Westford, MA. In the words of judge Beverly Burney, the BMDCA draft test "gives our breed the opportunity to relate the heritage of the Berner Sennenhund of Switzerland. It is a realistic test of working conditions that is obtainable by most Bernese Mountain Dogs with proper training and equipment."

For the first part of such tests, each team must individually harness, hitch and maneuver through the course, which includes slow and back exercises. Next, as a group the dogs must perform a three-minute stay, sitting, lying or standing at the handler's discretion. The final part of the test is a half-mile freight haul with dirt paths and roads, small hills, obstacles and distractions. Most dogs pass the test, but those that don't generally are faulted for tight leads, the handler's steering the dog, collisions with the ring or ring equipment or not remaining in position for the duration of the "stay" exercise. The BMDCA also features a carting class at its annual national specialty; a variety of interesting and unusual carts are exhibited in a working demonstration.

The Newfoundland Club of America also has been very involved in draft work for quite some time. The Newfoundland originated in Canada and is a land and water breed. It weighs approximately 140 to 150 pounds and has a thick, dense coat. This breed was once used extensively for draft work and the NCA encourages this today to provide an opportunity for working demonstrations. The NCA offers its set of draft test regulations and a carting information packet as well as other useful information. (See end of article.)

Equipment for carting is relatively simple to obtain; cost depends on the type of equipment and its intended use. Carts can be purchased ready-made in a variety of styles (two-wheeled or four-wheeled); there are people who will make them to order or you can build one yourself. If you choose the last option, William Sullivan's *The Cart Book with Plans and Projects* includes a world of information on various types of carts and their uses along with actual plans, material lists and instructions for building a number of carts. One such cart is the two-wheeled sulley, which makes a wonderful dog cart. Sullivan's book includes instructions for making harnesses as well.

If you'd just as soon not tackle these tasks, you can easily and inexpensively obtain a cart and harness from a number of sources. Be sure to consider what you want to do with the cart, what type of loads you plan to haul and so on before ordering. (See "outfitters" sidebar.)

Although the draft dog today is seldom utilized for actual working tasks, draft work remains an ongoing tradition through recreational activities such as carting classes in breed dog shows and matches, working demonstrations and charitable exhibitions. Activities such as these give dog owners a chance to illustrate the natural working abilities of their breeds and provide the dogs an opportunity to exhibit skills that can be applied to actual working situations.

References (see also books and periodicals in "resources" sidebar):

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The Complete Bernese Mountain Dog, Jude Simonds, Howell Book House, New York, 1989.

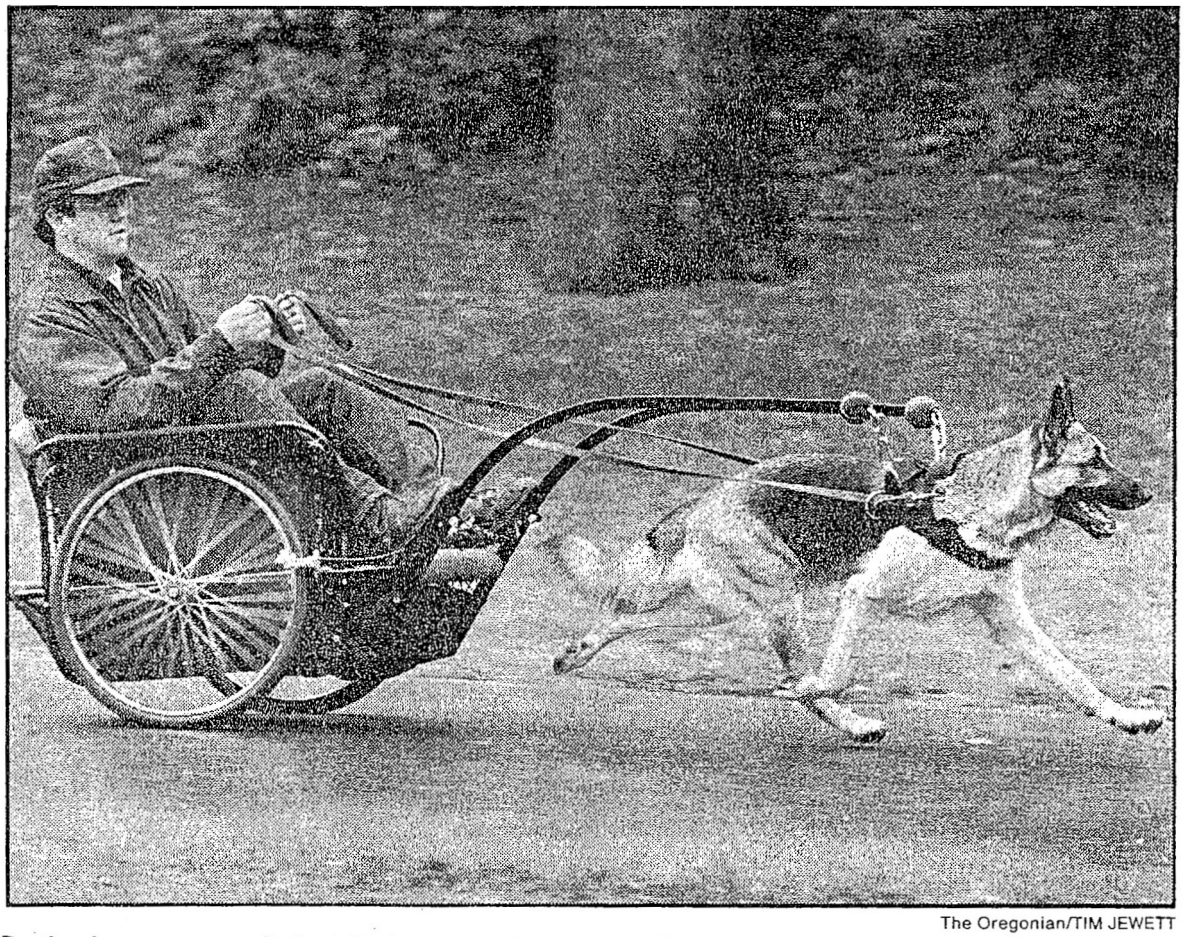
Working Dogs, Audrey and Edward Hart, B.T. Batsford Ltd., London, 1984.

"Draft Work at the Specialty," Tony Packard, *The Alpenhorn*, BMDCA, August 1990.

"A Working Berner," *BMDCA Bulletin*, May 1991.

"Carting: Making History," Alison Jaskiewicz, *The Alpenhorn*, February 1990.

Berner lover Kathy Kear is a communications expert living in Knoxville, TN. ■



The Oregonian/TIM JEWETT

Portland entrepreneur Robert Graham exercises his dog Kam during an outing in Laurelhurst Park.

Carts provide exercise for dogs

By LINDA CAMPILLO
Correspondent, The Oregonian

Portland entrepreneur Robert Graham has put a new twist on the phrase "horse and carriage" by placing a dog at the other end of the reins he holds as he rides in a small steel cart.

"We developed it for our German shepherd, but so many people approached us about building one for them that we decided to go into business," Graham said.

The small carriages are made for exercising working breeds such as German shepherds, mastiffs and rottweilers on off-street areas such as parks or on protected bicycle paths.

"Working dogs don't work enough in this country," Graham said. "Our goal when we started was to prolong dogs' lives and give them healthier lives."

Graham's 4-year-old German shepherd has hip dysplasia — a genetic malformation of the hip joint. Pulling exercise can be beneficial in strengthening the area around the joint as long as it doesn't cause pain to the animal, explained Barry Powell, a veterinarian who looked at Graham's cart design.

After looking at the finished cart, Powell said, he could not see any way that it would harm the dogs that were pulling it.

Called Canine Carriages, the small carts are made of high carbon steel with heavy fabric sides. Bicycle wheels are used for moving the cart, and a brake system assists the dog as it moves downhill. Inside, the cart contains a padded seat, which is the only part not made in Portland; it's manufactured on the East Coast.

"Our goal when we started was to prolong dogs' lives and give them healthier lives."

— Robert Graham

The carts also are balanced so that a small child can pull an adult on a level surface using only one finger, Graham said. The dog pulls the full weight carried in the cart only when going uphill.

Although all large dogs need to be exercised, Graham said, the cart was designed to help dogs such as his that need to strengthen their muscles. "We want to keep dogs healthier."

Graham spent about three years developing the cart, and he builds and assembles each one in his garage. The carriages come in two sizes that sell for $[redacted] and $[redacted] The only other company that makes a cart similar to Graham's is located in Finland, he said, and those carriages cost about $1,395.

Canine Carriages

"We're pulling for you"

4636 S.E. 30th
Portland, OR 97202

BOB & MONIA GRAHAM
(503) 232-3745

Parades

Parades are a tremendous way to get your carting activity some recognition, and the carts always seem to be a big hit. However, parades can be a little stressful, phyiscally and mentally, to all, so some preparation and practice is in order to enjoy it.

Warrick Wilson played in a military marching band in high school, and learned a number of tricks about parades from a people point of view. Some discussion on Pyr-L (the Great Pyrenees mailing list) led to other ideas relating to dogs. A summary of these ideas follows:

Tips to make sure you have fun...safely

1. **Be patient!** The phrase "hurry up and wait" applies perfectly to most parades. It takes a lot of time to get going. A lot of parade organizers will tell you to be at your position in the marshaling area (where everyone gets in the proper order) WAY too early. It's one thing if you're a band and need to warm up or prepare a float, but most people and dogs will get bored. Let the organizers know that you have dogs and will be there, but will wait closer to the start time. *No parade ever started early!!* Be ready, but expect to stand around waiting. It may be easier to have one member of your group, without a dog, arrive to let the parade marshals know that your group will be present and get any instructions needed.
2. **Take water**. You never know when you'll be done, or how thirsty your dogs will get. Having a supply of water available, and a handy bowl or bucket, will let you give a quick drink, if needed. Since we're talking about carts, it's usually pretty easy to have the dogs haul their own water. Sometimes a spray bottle is useful to spritz the dog to keep it cool. Some dogs will drink from a water bottle, too. However, drinking from the same bottle as your dog will likely gross out the spectators!
3. **Watch the road!** Summer parades on hot asphalt can burn your dog's feet! If you are really concerned, drop out! Some people have purchased special "dog booties" that will keep the dog's pads off the pavement. Watch for sharp stones, broken glass, nails, etc. Some groups in the parade may be handing out candy. Beware of dropped candies that your dog may snatch, wrapper and all!
4. **Remember that most parades do not end up where they start!** If you've just done a three, four or five mile route, and your car is at the starting area, then you have to get back there. This is where going as a group can be great. Have one or two cars waiting at the ending point. These cars can ferry some of the other drivers back to pick up the other vehicles. Some parades will provide a shuttle service - ask about it when you sign up! You're usually on your own, though, so think ahead.
5. **Don't surprise your dog!** If you're going to wear a Santa suit along the route, don't put it on just before the start of the parade. Let your dog see you in it a few days before, and practice your carting with the suit on. Don't suddenly decorate the cart, either. Some dogs react poorly to those sudden changes and refuse to pull the cart.
6. **Have some idea of what you'll do when you stop!** Parades are notorious for having to stop. Floats break down, traffic sometimes must be let through, and TV coverage can lead to the parade bunching up and slowing to a stop. If you can do some static demonstrations - tight turns, backing up, or skills - then you can entertain people still. Dogs that are good with crowds could be taken to see some people.
7. **Beware loose dogs!** Someone will have a dog that lunges at the dogs in your group. Make sure you have control, and that your dogs will not suddenly bolt, either towards the new dog or away from the new dog. If your group offers obedience training classes, you might casually mention this fact to the owner of the dog that springs at your group.

8. **Be prepared for problems!** Do you have a pump, patch kit, wrenches, spare inner tube(s), a couple of bungee cords, some Vise-Grip(tm) pliers, etc. with you? If you're not ready to make a quick fix to your cart, you could be in trouble if something happens! You might want to make sure that your group has a first-aid kit, for both people and pets, along for the ride.
9. **Dress properly!** Layers. That's the trick. Make sure you wear several layers of clothing. It's better to have too much than not enough. You can always take something off then. Remember that cold weather or wet weather can make things slippery, so be sure you have gloves that maintain a good grip on your lead.
10. **Wear comfortable shoes or boots!** Nothing is more important than this. If you develop blisters with three miles to go, you will NOT be a happy person at the end of the parade. This is supposed to be fun. Wear shoes that are comfortable, fit well, and are appropriate to the terrain. Comfy shows with slick soles are not good for Santa Claus Parades where there may be ice. If you get blisters, try wearing two pairs of thin socks. Wool socks are very comfortable, both in summerand winter, and help to reduce blisters because the wool wicks away perspiration on your feet.
11. **Try not to follow the horses!** Horse poop is strangely attractive to the most obedient and well-mannered dog, and can cause your stately parade formations to fall into a chaotic writhing pile of dogs. You probably don't have a choice, but if you do, stay in front of the horses.
12. **Exercise your dogs before the parade starts!** You always have some idea of when you'll be starting. Try and potty your dog before you get going, since it doesn't look too good to see a dog peeing in the parade. Make sure to clean up behind your dogs as necessary, too!
13. **TV coverage loves carting dogs!** It's a novelty to most people, but you'll no doubt find the camera right in your dog's face. Your dogs are all well-mannered enough not to mind, I'm sure, but you may want to have some carting "tricks" ready if asked by the camera operator.
14. **Get in shape! Both of you!** The parade is like a long walk. But you should be in shape to make that walk. You don't want either of you to be dragging at the end. And that means that you must practice and train, just to get in shape. Get used to walking that distance, with your dog pulling the cart (and kids or whatever) at the same time. Make sure your dog's nails are trimmed, that the feet are in good shape, and that the harness does not chafe. Then go out and build up the endurance. Try not to load your dog down with too much weight in the cart. It shouldn't be a forced march.

How to find Parades

When first starting out, finding parades to take part in can be a tricky business. Most places have some standard parades - for example, a Santa Claus Parade - but finding out how to enter these events can be a trial. Once you get into a parade, you'll likely get on a mailing list and never miss it again.

The following suggestions have been made by people on the carting-l list, and for that I thank them.

1. Call City Hall. Try the departments dealing with Culture or Recreation.
2. Call service clubs, like the Jaycees, Kiwanis, or Civitan clubs. These groups either sponsor or participate in a lot of parades, and could probably provide some leads.
3. Call a Drum Corps or Marching Band organization. These guys are in huge demand for parades, and they will know about ANY parade within a couple of hours of your location. Guaranteed. Many corps have a newsletter that lists upcoming parades.
4. Talk to other dog clubs about events they know about. It's the best way to get a good scoop on what's going on. Make sure you keep a list of contacts and stay in touch.
5. Internet resources are good, too. There is a K9EVENTS mailing list, plus your breed-specific and activity-specific lists.

Compiled by Warrick Wilson – originally posted on the website "Carting With Your Dog" in 1998.

Draft Dogs

Doris Lendon

(Reprinted from *Oasis*, Vol. 1, July 1988, this article appeared originally in the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Great Britain Newsletter, November 1981.)

The draught dog was a familiar sight in days gone by, when farmers, bakers, and even at times the postman used Bernese, Grosse Schweizer, St. Bernards, Rottweilers, and Newfoundlands. The Swiss army used mostly Grosse Schweizer in World War II, as this type had more stamina. To move ammunition and provisions, they were usually harnessed in pairs. Teams of four with a lead dog also were seen.

I remember the dogs and carts outside our village dairy, patiently waiting for the milk churns to be emptied. If any growling was heard, a shout from inside would be sufficient to restore peace. On the way home, we would take turns to ride on the carts. Today, one is lucky to see this once familiar sight. Cars and tractors are faster and more convenient, but not so picturesque.

Enthusiasts in Switzerland are actively trying to keep this old tradition alive with walks and rambles through the countryside with the family, dog, and cart. This type of recreation is unfortunately not allowed in this country. Nonetheless, we can still have a great deal of fun with our dogs and carts, and at the same time the dogs have a purpose and a job they enjoy....We can give rides to children at village fetes, the proceeds going to charity. One Bernese led the carnival procession this year, and for several years has delighted children by helping Father Christmas with the presents. We do occasionally hear some well-meaning person say, "Poor dog; how cruel!" Little do these people realize that the dogs actually enjoy it all, lapping up the attention. Our old girl gets excited when being harnessed, knowing that she will have as much fun as the children she gives rides to, not to speak of the number of tidbits that come her way.

In this country, it is prohibited to harness dogs and for them to pull carts on any public highway. Provided that no cruelty is involved, parks and open spaces are acceptable. If any invitations come along to join a procession, it is important to check with the local police and to obtain written permission to be on the roads. [U.S. readers, take note.] Nearly every canton in Switzerland has different rules and regulations regarding draught dogs, some quite illogical and too numerous to mention here. Others are worth noting, if only for the comfort of our dogs.

Do not: overload the carts; use bitches in season; use a dog under 60 cm [about 24 inches] in height, or an underdeveloped dog.

Do: make sure shafts are long enough to give the dog plenty of room for the hind legs to stride out and not come into contact with the cart; see that the harness is the correct fit for the dog, since an ill-fitting harness can impair breathing. If using a pair, only dogs of the same sex must be used together, and they should be as nearly as possible of equal size. One amusing idea put forward was that draught dogs should, by law, wear boots in winter as wet feet become cold and clogged with ice and snow, and thus painful for the dog.

A fully grown dog will pull up to 150 kg [about 330 pounds], depending on size and condition of the dog. Rubber tires and wheels with ball bearings make pulling far easier than the metal-rimmed wood wheels. When doing charity work, we ask for use of an area as level as possible.

Regular work should not commence until the dog is about 18 months old, but since none of our dogs do daily work it seems a good idea to try them on a cart as youngsters. Most dogs will take to harness and cart without the slightest problem. If not too keen, gentle coaxing and a few biscuits can work wonders, and the calmer the handler, the easier it will be.

It is advisable to try the first ride in an open space to have plenty of room for turning. Here I speak from experience, as our young bitch would not be harnessed in our garden. Resigned to the idea that she would never pull a cart, we did take her along to a large field, and to everyone's surprise we had no problems. Do have a few training sessions before taking them out in public.

Construction of carts should be strong and at the same time as light as possible. Only four-wheeled carts should be used, as loads are distributed evenly, and tipping backward or forward is impossible. A hand brake is a useful addition.

Several Swiss leiterwaegeli have been brought to England. One small cart was found in an old barn, looking very dilapidated. It has now been restored by a vintage car enthusiast and sports a plaque with date of restoration and name of the craftsman.

Shafts are best cut from ash, two for the single dogcart and one middle shaft for a pair to pull. By the base of the shaft is a bar, known as the swingle tree, with a chain or rope secured to each end. These chains or ropes are connected to the harness. It is important that shaft and ropes elevate slightly toward the front, which will help the pulling power on uneven roads. The bar must be 5 to 10 cm [about 2 to 4 inches] wider on each side of the dog to prevent the ropes or chains from rubbing on the hind legs. For a pair of dogs, it is advisable to have a bar for each dog, with a short connection at the front of the shaft for each dog.

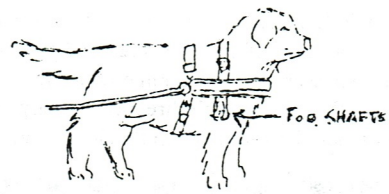
Three types of harness are still in use in Switzerland. Whichever type is preferred, it must fit the individual dog.

The *sielen* harness is a broad, padded leather strap at least 8 cm [about 3.2 inches] wide. It should sit approximately on the shoulder joint. Two straps go across the back and one under the chest. Pulling power is from the chest.

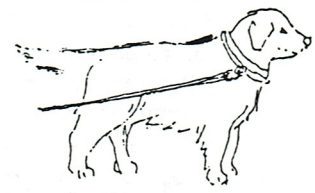
The *kummet* is a padded ring made from wood, iron, or leather. Two ropes fixed to the rings are, in turn, attached to the bar, or swingle tree.

The *kragen* or *collar* harness is a combination of the above two types. The leather widens at the sides, and incorporates the first strap across the back and the ring of the kummet. This harness envelops the whole shoulder, and any pressure on the windpipe is supposedly virtually impossible.

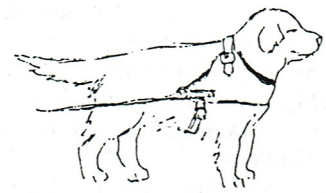
Of the three types, the sielen seems to be the most popular harness.



sielen



kummet



kragen or collar

Earlier in this century, cart competitions were held with loaded carts over different terrains. Barking while pulling was not liked for the simple reason that it puts extra strain on the dog's lungs and also is a nuisance. There were no rules on how fast a dog had to move. I have found that our dogs prefer a slow trot when pulling, but that may be just habit since they are used to walking fast.

Professor A. Heim summed it all up when he said, "No large dog stays as fit, healthy, and happy as a well-cared-for draught dog."...

Carting—a Word of Caution

Gil Evans

(Reprinted from *Oasis*, Vol. 1, November 1987.)

Cart training is best done in easy stages at home, rather than in demonstration halls, however enthusiastic you may feel at the time. By all means, try your dog in harness at a demonstration, but have a care for his feelings and stop immediately he shows signs of unhappiness or unwillingness. The idea is for the dog to enjoy carting, and so he must learn at his own pace, not yours, and must be well rewarded for cooperation.

Dogs forced into harness and cart before they are fully prepared are liable to frighten and injure both themselves and people. Control is of the essence. A horse is taught to stop, walk steadily on long reins, and change pace and direction before it is introduced to draught work. A dog should have the same careful preparation. If the dog drags you on the lead, how safe will he be with a cart? Don't expect the dog to learn it all in 10 minutes in a noisy, crowded, distracting demonstration hall. I suggest the following stages for training guidance.

1. Let the dog become thoroughly accustomed to the harness by taking him for walks in it, or putting him in it for an hour or so each day. Make sure that it fits comfortably.
2. It may help your dog to learn to pull if you attach a log (well behind) to the harness so that he can slowly drag it about. Show him the log first! Personally, I think a log is more distracting than a light, quiet-running cart.

In this very important stage, you must familiarize the dog with the cart—its noise, appearance, and movement. He can't investigate it when it's fastened behind him. If the dog gets worried when harnessed to the cart, he is liable to whip round in his tracks to face it, further upsetting himself when his legs inevitably tangle with chains and shafts. The dog could put himself off for a long time, or forever.

3. Get the dog used to having the cart pulled up behind, and the shafts and chains attached. Make sure that he has enough room for leg action. Practice until the dog is placid about it. My dogs have learned to step sideways into the shafts, which is rather useful.
4. On flat, open ground, lead the dog gently forward a few steps, praising profusely. Tidbits may be useful. Practice until the dog has learned to move off smoothly, guided by a loose lead, and will stop on command.
5. Practice walking slowly in large circles (to avoid corner turns) so that the dog gets used to the pressure of the inner shaft and pull of the outer shaft. The dog will feel restricted and hampered at first.
6. Introduce round corners. Practice in both directions. Sharp turns too early can cause upset when the shafts bump the dog's legs.
7. If all is well, increase the pace to a slow trot with equally smooth starts and stops.
8. Lightly load the cart, slowly building up the weight, properly balanced. Although a Bernese is capable of pulling a good weight, he has to get used to the idea first, and slowly build up the muscles to cope. Running muscles differ from pulling muscles.

Most dogs will enjoy carting if properly taught. Nervous ones just take more patience than bolder types. My bitches love carting and bounce about merrily when the harness is brought out. The younger one is adept at jumping in for a ride when it's not her turn to pull. More of a feat than you might imagine, since it is a two-wheeled cart and she has to maintain the balance!

THE CENTER FOLD

The pages that occupy the center spread are taken from The NCA *Draft Equipment guide* (see list at right) via the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America *Newsletter*, First Quarter 1990. The newsletter editor, Dorothy Brackney, received the following assurance from Consie Powell: "...The *Draft Equipment Guide* is still available (now printed on 100% recycled paper), and the cost is still $5.00, payable to Newfoundland Club of America. We're pleased that GSMD folks can possibly find this information helpful. We put it together to help *all* draft dogs and their people."

Avid carter **Beth Zipse** compiled this information to help others in getting started in carting.

BOOKS

Newfoundland Draft Work, a Guide for Training, Consie Powell, 1987-88

Cart and Sled Dog Training (available from Nordkyn Outfitters [see below])

Draft Equipment Guide, Roger Powell (available from Newfoundland Club of America, Roger Powell [see below] at $5.00, or Nordkyn Outfitters)

ARTICLES

"Cart Training a Bernese Puppy," Gale Werth (AKC *Gazette*, December 1987; reprinted in *The Alpenhorn*, June 1988)

"Cart Training the Bernese," Marty Lockhart (*The Alpenhorn*, June 1988)

"Dog Carting," Beverly Barney (*The Alpenhorn*, June 1988)

SOURCES

Information

Carting Information Packet, Newfoundland Club of America.

Working Dog Committee, Roger Powell, 5808 Olive Rd., Raleigh, NC 27606

Cart Book with Plans and Projects. William Sullivan, Tab Books, Inc., Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214

Nordkyn Outfitters, POB 1023, Graham, WA 98338-1023 (206-847-4128)

Konari Outfitters LTD, Ed Blechner, RD 1, Box 441B, Vergennes, VT 05491 (802-759-2100)

Gale Werth, Broken Oaks Berners, 2976 CTH MM, Rt. 3, Madison, WI 53711 (608-271-0235)

Harness and Cart Suppliers

Newfoundland Novelties (Newfoundland Club of America), POB 73, Rheems, PA 17570-0073 (717-367-8792)

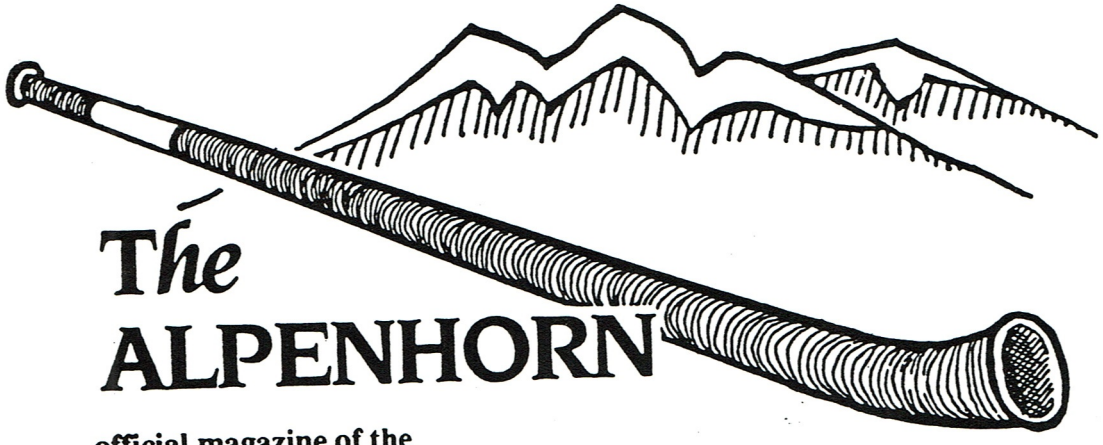
Von Russ Giants, Harry E. Russ, Jr., 123 Yaeger Ave., Forty Fort, PA 18704 (717-288-0735)

Town and Country Carts, Raceway Products, 2708 N. Walnut St., Muncie, IN 47303 (317-289-2244)

Ikon Outfitters LTD, Eva and Frank Ruzicka, 7597 Latham Rd., Lodi, WI 53555 (608-592-4397)

Konari Outfitters LTD [see above]

Nordkyn Outfitters [see above]

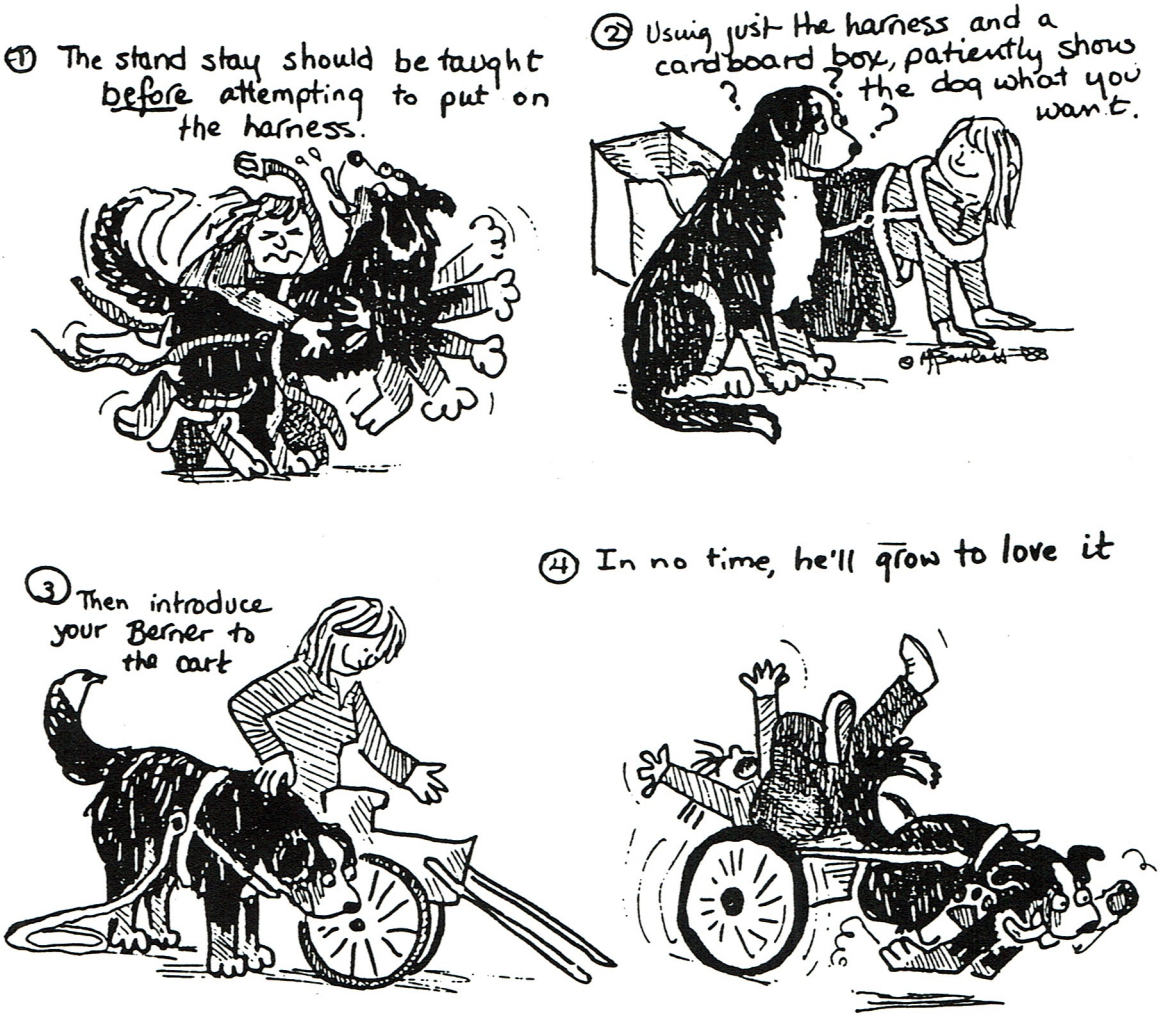


The ALPENHORN

official magazine of the
Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America

JUNE 1988
Activities

Bartlett's Berners


① The stand stay should be taught before attempting to put on the harness.
② Using just the harness and a cardboard box, patiently show the dog what you want.
③ Then introduce your Berner to the cart
④ In no time, he'll grow to love it

CARTING

CART TRAINING A BERNESE PUPPY

Gale Werth

[Gale wrote this article for Julie Crawford's breed column in the AKC *Gazette*, December 1987.]

Perhaps the most exhilarating part of getting a Bernese Mountain Dog puppy is the planning and anticipation that precedes the actual day of arrival. That day is the culmination of months of thought, study, travel, planning, breeder contact, and delays. The excitement, when the day finally arrives, can be overwhelming.

Too often, however, new owners assume that all they can do with an 8-week-old puppy is to housetrain it and wait impatiently for the pup to be old enough or large enough to participate in all of the wonderful activities available to Berner fanciers. Indeed, that is a wrong assumption. A new Bernese pup can be involved in a wealth of activities that will help to make the dog a well-rounded individual and also provide the owners with a sense of accomplishment and pride....

I could suggest informal obedience, retrieving, tracking, and tricks, but I want to concentrate on puppy carting. Even a young pup can easily learn the rudiments of carting. An inexpensive fits-all pup-type harness usually is available through Siberian Husky clubs. The harness that I use costs $13.00 if purchased and about $3.00 if home sewn. The harness requires 10 feet of 1-inch nylon webbing at 25 to 30 cents per foot in fabric stores or auto departments of hardware stores. It will fit pups from about 8 to 15 weeks old.

The harness has no buckles and just slips on. The pup can easily learn to stand, stay so that the legs can be lifted to position the harness. Allow the pup to romp around in the harness, under supervision, until he is at ease. Most young pups are barely aware that they are wearing it.

All exercises are on lead, so once the pup is content to walk, run, even lie down happily while wearing the harness it's time to attach a drag line to the harness to acquaint him with something following him. It's just another experience for the pup as the line snakes through the grass. He will stop often and look behind to see what the rustle is.

More quickly than you would believe, the pup will ignore the line and you can graduate to the next step. Cardboard boxes make ideal puppy carts because they are readily available and lightweight, and don't run up on the pup or cause fear as would wheels.

Punch two holes in the bottom front corners of the box so that it will ride flat on the ground. Thread 5 feet of light rope through the holes and knot it. Then you can attach the box to the harness using a leash or rope. The box usually is positioned about 2 feet behind the pup. If...the pup shows fear, increase the distance between him and the box. He may not be concerned if it is 6 feet behind, and it can be moved closer as he gains confidence.

At first, walk the puppy around as he drags the box. Learn to read him. If he's happy, then move faster so that he trots. If he's worried, offer encouragement until he forgets that the box is there and then proceed. The next step is to introduce a new surface, such as gravel or cement, and provide experience at that level. Each new surface on which the pup pulls the box will cause different sounds and drag. It might be necessary to add a very light weight, such as a jacket, to keep the box flat on the ground rather than bouncing about and distracting or stressing the pup. Constantly be aware of the pup's reactions. Read him.

You can do these exercises daily. Set a time limit of about 10 minutes. As in all training, you must have patience and understanding. Always be ready to go back a step or two if the pup shows fear or hesitation. Use consistent commands, have a positive attitude, and encourage as you work, and the pup will absorb much of your enthusiasm and learn at the same time. Both of you will benefit from the partnership.

The background this fun training gives your pup will stand him in good stead when he is old enough to advance to training shafts and, finally, a cart. The time you spend building the pup's confidence and working together will benefit you later in all aspects of your Berner's life with you and will be obvious to all.

[Gale also wrote an excellent, comprehensive article on carting that has appeared several times in the national and regional newsletters. If you have not read it, ask a member who has to give or lend you a copy. If carting interests you, it's information that you should not miss.]

CART TRAINING THE BERNESE

Marty Lockhart

Training the Bernese to be a cart dog can be fun, and the three basic steps in this article may assist people in training their dogs to be good draft animals. First, however, one must realize that although most Bernese will pull a cart, some will reject being confined in a set of traces. I have been carting and building carts since the early 70s, and have found that a few dogs would have nothing to do with a cart. Also, I firmly believe that dogs should do no hard or heavy pulling until they are 2 years old, no matter what their size. Let them stabilize in bone and muscle structure; failing to do so could be heartbreaking.

Step 1, the harness. Harnesses are very important in the making of a contented carting Bernese. The harness must fit the dog properly to ensure comfort and ease of pulling. It must fit across the chest, back, and undercarriage firmly, but not tightly, to allow as much comfort as possible. Make sure that the chest strap—the part in front of the shoulders—fits up across the chest, and does not ride so low as to interfere with the outward movement of the front legs. Also ensure that the understrap does not set so far forward as to interfere with the front legs as they move forward. A basic harness can be made or purchased at feed or pet supply stores.

Now you are ready to see whether your dog will accept this new training article. Place the harness on the dog and check to be sure that the understrap is snug but not tight. Add the dog's regular training collar and lead, and both of you are ready to take a walk together, the dog in harness. At this point, only you will know how well your Bernese accepts the training article. If the dog accepts it and appears to be happy wearing it, leave it on for a short time and then remove it. Make a big deal out of the dog's wearing the harness—lots of praise—so that the next time your Berner will want to accept it. The same applies to dogs who are not so happy about the harness; it just may take a little longer for those dogs to accept. Have patience and understanding.

Step 2, pulling. By pulling, I mean accepting the traces, but not really. Two old broomstick handles simulate the shafts or traces very well. Affix to the ends of the sticks a crosspiece of wood that will be to the rear of the dog. Be sure that the crosspiece is the same width as the dog and that the sticks are sufficiently long as to not interfere with the rear legs. While another person holds the dog in a standing position, temporarily attach the harness to the sticks. If the dog accepts this apparatus, allow him to drag it around. This step will adjust the dog to the traces, as well as the noise of a cart. Remember, patience and understanding.

Step 3, carting. If training has gone well, you and the dog are now ready for the cart. Be sure that the cart you select, like the harness, fits the dog. An animal that is 22 to 24 inches at the shoulder would look out of place harnessed to a cart made for a 26- to 27-inch dog. If you choose a two-wheeled sulky, the traces when the dog is standing harnessed to the cart should be level with the cart. Also, when weight is added to the seat of the sulky, the cart should be so balanced that no weight rests on the dog's back. This rule applies whether the cart is made of wood or metal. Finally, where they attach to the harness, the traces should be just outside the dog's shoulders and long enough to not interfere with the rear drive.

I hope that this information will help all of you who are interested in carting, because *carting is fun*!

DOG CARTING

Beverly Barney

[This article appeared in the October 1984 issue of the BMDCA Newsletter.]

...The cart must be fitted to the dog and not the other way around. The axle must be at the center of gravity so that it, not the dog's back, supports most of the weight. A few hundred pounds of weight should put less than 10 pounds of pressure on the dog's back. The cart should have wheels sized to keep the cart level when hitched to the dog. The load will shift forward and put weight on the dog's back if the wheels are too large. If they are too small, the dog is pulling up an incline.

Along with a properly fitted cart, a properly fitted harness is a must. Since the dog pulls the cart forward by pulling on the breastplate, that portion should be the same size as the dog's chest. The function of the shoulder strap is to keep the breastplate in place. The back strap takes the weight of the load and should be in the middle of the back. The traces secure the harness to the cart. A belly strap also can be used.

Important: do not subject immature dogs to loads. They can be trained to pull the empty cart at 1 year old, but the effect on the bones of pulling a load in not known.

Let the dog become acquainted with the harness by wearing it about the house. Put the traces on and let them drag along. Give the dog the feel of pulling against the harness by walking behind while holding the traces. You may have to teach a command such as "Forward," meaning "move out in front of me." I use "Go ahead." It's the same command that I use in tracking for the same reason.

Once the dog is broken to the harness, you can acquaint him with the cart. Do not hitch the dog to the cart, no matter how much you want to. Instead, put the cart in an area where the dog can investigate it. Pull the cart around so that the dog sees it move and hears the noise that it makes. Next, leave the dog on a sit stay and pull the cart up so that he is sitting between the shafts, which are resting on the ground. Lots of praise is in order now, but let him get out of the shafts if he's frightened. Next, keeping the dog on a sit stay, elevate the shafts to the position they would occupy if attached to the harness. Now stand the dog, and move dog and cart forward as you hold the shafts at the proper height. Allow the dog to escape at the first sign of panic. Do not punish him if he bolts, but praise if he remains between the shafts.

Now it's time for the dog, wearing the harness, to pull the cart. Put the dog on a sit or stand stay and hitch him to the cart. Attach a leash to the dog's collar and stand beside him. I ask a friend to hold up the shafts the first few times to eliminate any weight on the dog's back. Now give the forward command and move out. If

the dog moves, praise, praise, and more praise. If he bolts, calm him and try again. At this stage, 10 steps forward is enough. Every day add a few more steps. Be patient.

Now you can go out into traffic. Remember, the dog is helpless between the shafts. Do not take him out unless he is very comfortable pulling the cart. Keep the dog on leash at all times. Watch out for cars and unleashed dogs. If you travel on the streets, your cart must carry a slow-moving vehicle sign to be legal. I also carry bicycle flags to increase visibility. You may want to carry Mace or a stick to ward off attacking dogs.

When the dog is mature, you can begin to add weight to the cart. Work up the weight gradually. The first few times the dog has to lean into the harness to move the weighted cart may require encouragement. A mature dog in a well-fitted harness pulling a balanced cart can move 200 pounds quite easily....
Happy carting!

The idea of a BMDCA Working Dog certificate was born in June 1979 when the BMDCA Board of Directors agreed to explore its possibilities and asked Beverly Barney to formulate standards for it. Like the cat we all know, since then it has used up some of its allotted nine lives.
The August 1979 BMDCA Newsletter included a letter from the Newfoundland Club of America indicating that group's willingness to cooperate with the BMDCA in preparing a draft work proposal. Also included was the rough form NCA WDC proposal, with comments, and the suggestion that the two groups might develop a joint test. Sounded promising. The NCA carried on, formalizing its proposal, and has been conducting trials and awarding certificates for several years. The BMDCA proposal died for three years.

The proposal's second life began in 1982 when, during its in-person meeting, the Board approved the certificate on a probationary basis for one year. The regional clubs were asked to present the draft work trial proposal to their members and respond to the Board with comments and suggestions. After this action, the proposal apparently suffered its second death.

The next mention of the draft work certificate proposal appears in the minutes of the May 1984 in-person Board meeting, when the proposal was reapproved and submitted to the Regional Club Council for one year, during which time the Council could take action on it. The Board's final approval would wait until the next in-person meeting in 1985. Still alive but near death at the 1985 meeting, the proposal went back to nurse Barney for simplification of language and content. Apparently, her efforts were in vain. No mention of the proposal appears in either the 1986 or 1987 in-person Board meeting minutes.

What will happen this year? Can we stand the suspense? Will the cat come back?

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG DRAFT WORK TRIAL

[Following is the draft trial certificate proposal as published in the October 1984 issue of the BMDCA Newsletter. The proposal closely follows the original Newfoundland Club of America proposal.]

Qualification
A dog must pass each exercise in the draft trial to the satisfaction of the judge. A dog must pass all exercises at one trial to earn a certificate from the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America.

Purpose
The drafting exercises are designed to develop and demonstrate the inbred abilities of purebred Bernese Mountain Dogs in a land work capacity involving hauling. The Bernese Mountain Dog has historically functioned as a draft dog in various capacities, and performance of these exercises is intended to demonstrate skills resulting from both natural ability and training that are applicable to realistic work situations. Efficiency in accomplishment of tasks is essential; it is also desirable that the dog evidence willingness and enjoyment of the work in a combination of controlled teamwork with the handler and natural independence.

Objectives
The drafting exercises are intended to allow Bernese Mountain Dog owners and their dogs to demonstrate draft work abilities. Since Bernese Mountain Dogs live in a variety of climates and perform draft work in a variety of situations, any of the following draft rigs may be used in performance of the exercises: cart, sled, toboggan, travois. The same rig must be used in all of the exercises.

Bernese Mountain Dog Draft Trial

EXERCISES (all completed off lead)

1. Basic control: heels at normal, fast, and slow pace; turns; performs down stay and recall.
2. Harness and hitch: shows willingness to be harnessed and hitched to draft rig without shying.
3. Control with distraction: shows control in the presence of intriguing distractions while attached to draft rig.
4. Basic command: hauls forward, slows down, stops, backs up, stays 2 minutes, handler out of sight.
5. Maneuvering: negotiates circles, 90-degree turns, broad curves, narrow areas, removable obstacle.
6. Distance freight haul: half-mile; handler loads appropriate freight load range for dog and traverses a cross-country course with dog hauling loaded rig.

REGULATIONS

To qualify, the dog and handler will perform each of the following exercises.

1. Basic control. Dog is expected to perform this exercise as specified in the AKC *Obedience Regulations*

for Heel Free, Long Down, and Recall. The Recall requires a proper finish. Dogs must perform on the first command.

2. Harness and hitch. Dog and handler enter ring; handler places dog on stay. Handler leaves dog, goes to ring entrance, gets harness, and returns to dog. Dog stands on command for harnessing. Handler harnesses dog. Dog heels with handler to draft rig and stands to be hitched. When hitched, dog and handler move into position, indicating dog is ready to work.

3. Control with distraction. Dog performs both parts of exercise with empty draft rig.

A. Dog moves (hauling) in a simple heel next to handler. Another dog on leash with handler passes in front of hauling dog in motion. Distractor must cross within approximately 10 feet of dog and keep moving in a straight path until well clear of team being tested.

B. Dog moves (hauling) in a simple heel next to handler. A distractor carrying a metal pie pan and metal spoon approaches team from front and bangs on pan with spoon at least once when approximately 10 feet from team. Passing to rear of team, distractor bangs pan at least once when approximately 10 feet from team. Pan must be banged five times.

4. Basic command. Dog performs exercises A through D while hitched to empty draft rig. Each exercise is performed on command and/or signal once, handler standing in front of dog.

A. Haul forward.
B. Slow down.
C. Stop.
D. Stay (2 minutes), handler out of sight. Dog may be left standing, sitting, or lying down, and must remain in that position until handler returns.
E. Back up 4 feet.

5. Maneuvering. Performed with empty draft rig. Course includes:

A. Circles (left and right).
B. 90-degree turns.
C. Broad curve.
D. Movement through narrow area 12 inches wider than widest dimension of draft rig.
E. Removable obstacle. Dog waits while handler removes obstacle, such as gate or tree branch. Dog and rig proceed through obstacle. Exercises D and E may be combined.

6. Distance freight haul. Handler loads draft rig with load appropriate to size and strength of dog, considering type of draft rig used. A simple half-mile, nonobstacle distance course is traversed. Judge must accompany handler and has authority to stop exercise if load is too great for dog in working conditions.

All exercises are performed off lead. Handlers may repeat commands and/or signals and/or praise, except during exercises 1 and 4, A, B, C, D. Except in harnessing and hitching, handler may not touch dog. Exercise 4E must be performed while dog is hitched if a wheeled vehicle is used. If a sled, toboggan, or travois is used, dog performs exercise before being hitched, backing into hitching position. Cross-country exercise must be performed outside. All other exercises may be performed inside or outside, but not both. Praise between exercises is permitted.

SCORING

1. Basic control	pass/fail	0-5
2. Harness/hitch	pass/fail	0-5
3. Control with distraction	pass/fail	0-5
4. Basic command	pass/fail	0-5
5. Maneuvering	pass/fail	0-5
6. Distance freight haul	pass/fail	0-5

Dogs are scored on willingness, ability, enthusiasm, naturalness as a team, and smoothness of performance. Dogs may earn 1 to 5 extra points in each exercise, depending on how they display these qualities. A total perfect score could be 30 points, allowing dogs that perform the exercises to qualify and receive extra credit for a smooth performance of a well-trained, eager worker.

These points are honor points, and any dog earning 20 or more points receives a With Honor certificate. A dog may enter additional trials after receiving a title in order to compete for a With Honor certificate.

To qualify, a dog must pass all exercises at one trial. The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America provides a certificate for dogs that earn passing scores at drafting trials. A dog that passes is awarded a DD title. The title follows the dog's name and all AKC and CKC working titles. The American Kennel Club and the Canadian Kennel Club do not recognize the DD title. The letter H will appear in the title of any dog that passes a drafting trial with 20 or more honor points (i.e., DD/H).

The appropriate weight load is between 25 and 35 percent of the dog's weight (veterinarian certified) registered on a spring scale. Part or all of the weight derives from the weight and drag of the rig. On the same terrain as the cross-country course, a spring scale is attached to the rig at the same point where the harness is attached. Then the rig is moved by pulling on the spring scale. When the rig is moving, the spring scale is read. Weight must be added to the rig until the spring scale registers the correct poundage.

The following are cartmakers who have provided carts to BMDCA members:

F. M. Lockhart, 1936 Dennis Ln., Santa Rosa, CA 95401 (705-545-5819) (sulky)

Harry Russ, Jr., 123 Yeager Ave., Forty Fort, PA 18704 (717-288-0735) (box style)

John DeGreef, Box 128, Bridgenorth, ON, KOL 1 HO, Canada (705-292-7952) (sulky, with wheels and runners)

BROKEN OAKS KENNEL
2976 CTH MM, Route #3
Madison, Wisconsin 53711
(608) 271-0235

My phone rings often from people wanting to get started carting with their Berner puppy or young adult. That phone time and cost could be better spent in other ways, hence this article.

I have carting articles from the Newfie Club which I have given out for years but those articles are referring primarily to formal carting for a certificate.

My own aim here is to advise the novice dog or puppy owner how to get started having fun and add a new dimension to their lives and that of their Bernese Mountain Dog.

Carting commands are normal obedience commands used along with a few added ones. Prior to harnessing your dog to the cart you would put your dog or pup on a "stand-stay" so you could either harness him and drop the shafts over him or so that you could draw the cart up to him. You would also use "stand-stay" when finished as well so you could unharness the dog without him fidgeting.

"Let's Go" or "Pull" works well in getting a dog to lead out and lean into the traces. Encouragement and enthusiastic praise along the way is a must.

"Whoa" can be your halt word or choose whatever command you wish. You should not need any other commands except the word you determine on for backing up with the cart such as "get back", "back" or "back up". This command can present problems in utility obedience but I won't take time here to cover that.

Initially one should have a harness. Ideally as an adult the harness should be made specifically for a dog that size with added strap length to make adjustments for growth changes or another dog of approximate size.

Pups, however, and older pups need not have so specifically "their own" harness. I have a Siberian Husky non-adjustable harness which I use on pups from 20-45 pounds and it sort of self-fits. The strap under the tail gets rather tight on bigger pups and then I graduate to a larger home-made harness or an adjustable one.

Put the harness on the pup and let him wear it around enough so that he forgets it is on. Young puppies hardly know it is there in the first place whereas older puppies need more acceptance time. Acceptance time might be 5 minutes or it might be 3 days of wearing the harness all the time. Generally a few moments is all that is required and then it is just a matter of getting the pup used to having it put on and taken off without rolling over on its back. That is where the obedience command "stand-stay" comes in.

You can prepare a beginner "cart" by punching holes in the front bottom outside corners of a cardboard box about 18" x 24". Take a cord of about 5 feet and run it thru the holes.

Reasons for using cardboard boxes are (1) they are cheap and usually available; (2) they make relatively no noise; (3) they do not run up on the dog; and (4) they provide a sense of "something" behind without being completely distracting and frightening.

Once a pup is accustomed to harness he easily can be harnessed to the cardboard box cart. The box itself should be some 5 feet from the rear of the dog to prevent it from frightening him too much. It will startle him when it moves but head out at a brisk walk and disregard his fears and he soon will forget it is there other than an occasional glance backwards.

In the event the box bounces too much put a light object such as a jacket in it just to give the box some "pull" and keep it flat to the ground.

Keep the chatter going and keep moving briskly. Treats can add to the fun, but don't rely on them to get the dog to move - use them as a reward as well as your voice after the dog has done what you wanted. Use the command "Let's Go" or "Pull" each time you set out.

As the pup gets familiar with the routine of harnessing and pulling I would vary the terrain a bit. First on the grass, then on gravel or cement - not necessarily in that order. Vary the routine with hills, buildings and distractions of other animals and kids.

Give pup plenty of experience at each of the following levels before progressing to the next. If at any time you reach a problem, back off one or two steps and begin again and build confidence.

(1) Harness; (2) box; (3) terraine; and (4) distractions.

Some dogs never get beyond pulling the "cart" with just a harness and line. Part of this might be from the fact that their owners don't want a cart or don't have a cart. It matters not, however, as the family and dogs still can enjoy the exercise, companionship and discipline that carting brings.

For winter fun and learning children's round metal sliding saucers (often called snowflakes) (about $10-$15) are ideal and kids love rides. The flat plastic sleds are cheaper but break more readily and attaching the "line" to them encourages breakage. Saucers have several advantages over the flat plastic sleds or regular runner sleds. Due to their rounded bottoms saucers have the ability to go any direction easily and quickly - even backwards whereas runner type sleds only can go forward or make very slight turns. Flat plastic slides offer no handholds for kids and any "freight" would slip off immediately. I have used my saucer for hauling wood, kids and junk. It gives marvelous experience to the dog. Problems arise only when either going too fast and stopping suddenly or going downhill where the saucer can "run up" on the dog. The handler must be aware of such conditions and their possible consequences and learn how to avoid or prevent fearful experiences.

Spring and summer make us think a bit on how we can progress without significant expense yet still get experience for our pups. If you have fooled around with pulling alot you will more than likely wish to graduate to a real cart. They can be expensive but present a once-only cost and you can easily re-sell your cart to other Berner people should you decide to "up-grade" or quit for whatever reason. Set a nominal price on the cart and it will trade hands quickly.

There are 3 major transitions which take place in the change over from pulling on a line to pulling a cart. They are as follows:

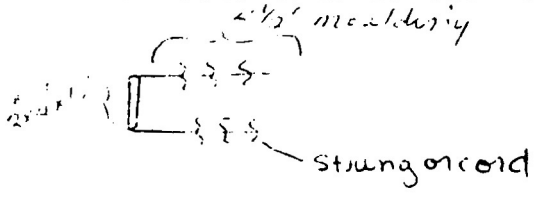
(1) Shafts restrict free movement of dog;
(2) Cart has more weight and feels different; and
(3) Cart is generally noisier and presents the "chase" factor.

The first transition is by far the most difficult for the dog to accept. I have found an easy way of getting around the problem of getting dogs used to shafts.

Understand that the shafts on a cart generally are firmly affixed to the cart and often are not removeable hence it is difficult to give the dog a chance to get used to the shafts without the cart being part of the act.

I devised a cheap and simple set of "training shafts" from two 4½ foot pieces of flat wooden moulding.* I drilled three holes each about 4 inches apart toward one end of each piece of moulding and threaded an 8-10 inch piece of light cord thru each hole.

The other ends of the moulding were nailed to a 15" piece of 2 x4.



The moulding strips are my shafts and I can attach them to the harness in whatever position I wish using the cords to tie the moulding to the harness shaft loops. The closer the hole is to the end of the moulding the farther back it will ride on the dog so it does not interfere as much with shoulder action. The 2 x 4 base piece acts not only as a connecter for the moulding strips but it presents another pulling situation with something following the dog.

Once the dog accepts the shafts in the farthest back position with no hesitation, move the shafts up one hole so the shafts reach farther forward. Work dog at this level until he shows no qualms about the shaft action. Be sure to do lots of turns as that is where the hesitation or distress about shafts comes in due to the restriction of the shafts.

At such time as you feel you have done your homework with the harness, shaft and pulling training then you can think about a cart.

You can build your own or you can purchase one. Ready-made carts seem to be better balanced than homemade carts and in some cases can be easily taken apart for storage and transport which does eliminate some problems. Use your own judgment. At the end of this article are names and addresses of a couple cart and harness manufacturers together with some cart plans.

*If no flat moulding available, door stop would work just as well.

Preliminary to harnessing the dog to the cart itself it is a smart idea to walk around the yeard or driveway with the cart and the dog. Ideally someone else should pull the cart so the dog has to be between you and the cart--just for exposure to your cart's own peculiar noises. A preamble to this would be taking walks with the dog while pushing a stroller or pulling a wagon - it all aids in getting him used to wheels and noises which go along with wheels.

The next step would be putting the dog on a stand-stay and dropping the shafts over the dog's back several times so he understands what is going to happen. Be firm about the dog holding the stand-stay.

After you have done the dropping the shaft bit a couple of times, attach the harness to the shafts and again drop the shafts over the dog and let the harness rest on the dog's back. Raise and lower the shafts several times, each time ending up by resting the harness and thereby the balance weight of the cart on the dog's back.

At such point as the dog doesn't care - that is when you slip the harness over his head. As yet I would not fasten the belly band tho- just encourage dog to move forward a couple of steps and you move the cart so it comes along.

Now is "Buckle Up" time! Ideally a second person will help at this point. The handler and the dog start off slowly with the second person (helper) holding the cart back so that it doesn't spook the dog. Move forward using alot of encouragement. Helper may want a dog lead attached to the rear of the cart so he can be farther back or not have to bend over but still have control. I, myself, prefer to hold onto the cart with my hands in order to slow it or even lift the cart around so it is straight behind the dog should the dog turn in the shafts or if you are working in a restricted area.

A long straight drive is what you would want but in many cases we are in a ring or small area. Until dog is willingly pulling straight, don't expect turns to go well. Any assistance offerred to begin with on tight corners will stand you in good stead later as the dog won't have a built-in fear of turns due to the tightness of the shafts against his inside shoulder from those first experiences of cart and corners.

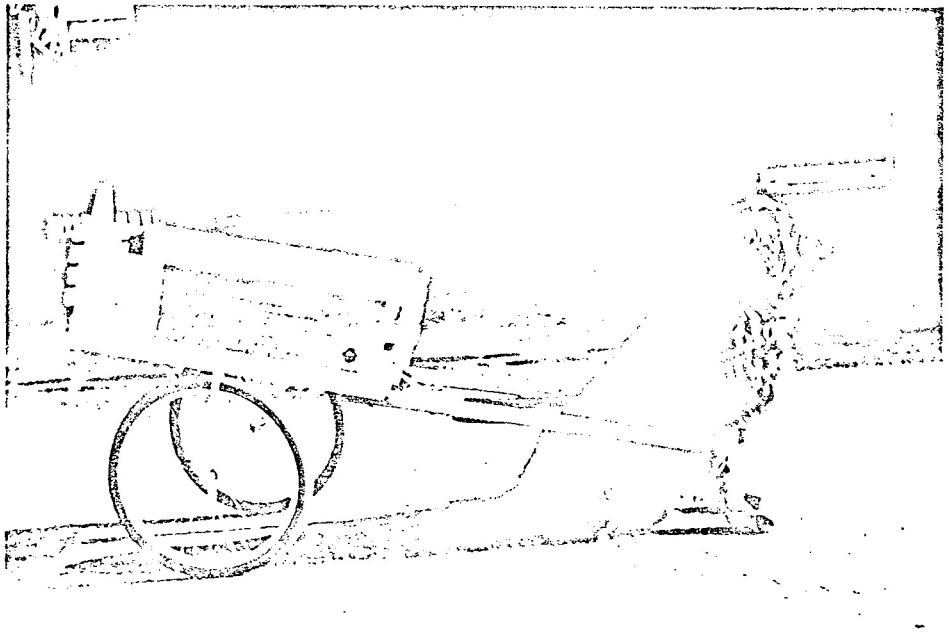
*Once the dog seems to be moving with his tail up and doesn't appear concerned about the cart behind him you can dispense with the helper and move right out with the dog in a trot. **BE AWARE** that at times the dog will try to snug up to you and the shafts will hit you just behind the knee (and produce pain and beautiful bruises). If at any point you anticipate distress on the part of the dog, halt and discuss the matter and then head out again. After that it is merely a matter of exposure and gradually increasing weights. The acceptance time for a dog to handle the shafts is called "inspanning" time and actually can and often will be only a matter of several minutes.*

This article is not to be taken as gospel but merely a vehicle to give you several good ideas and suggestions on how to get started and widen the horizon you and your Berner have before you.

GOOD LUCK, ENJOY & HAPPY HAULING
GALE WERTH & BROKEN OAKS BERNERS

Practical Dog Carting

by Roslyn Foreman



Dog power, a way to beat the gas shortage? That, in effect, is what the signs displayed on my dog cart say. While my Newfoundland drawn cart may never replace the automobile, I find myself using my cart to run more and more errands. Three years ago, when I began training my dogs to cart, motorists would laugh and make derogatory remarks as they sped by. Now, they roll down their windows, applaud, and triumphantly shout, "Right on!" As the gasoline supply dwindles, I find myself approached by more and more people who want to know how they, too, can harness dog power. I refer beginners to my first article, "Carting for Fun and Competition" (NEWF TIDE, Winter 1979). The addresses of where to buy carts and harnesses have not changed, and I cannot relate the basics of carting any better today than I explained it then. In light of the world situation today, a need has arisen for a more realistic approach to dog carting.

Rules for Competition

This year the Newfoundland Club of America introduced a new set of rules and exercises for carting competition geared to test the skills of a draft dog and handler under more realistic working conditions. In August, 1979, the new guidelines were to be demonstrated at the N.C.A. coming National Specialty.

REGULATIONS FOR CARTING

For Qualifying in Carting the dog and handler will perform each of the following:

1. Harness and Hitching With Cart or Wagon in the Ring. Dog and handler enter the ring. Handler places dog on stay. Handler leaves dog and goes to ring entrance to get harness and returns to dog. Dog stands on command for harnessing. Handler harnesses dog. Dog heels with handler to draft apparatus and stands to be hitched. When hitched, dog and handler move into position indicating dog is ready to work.

2. Basic Commands. Dog will perform exercises A through C while hitched and while pulling an appropriate draft load. Each exercise will be performed on command and/or signal once with the handler next to or in front of the dog.

a. haul forward
b. slow down
c. stop

Dog will also perform each of the following:

d. Back up a distance of 4 feet
e. stay (1 minute), handler out of sight. Dog may stand, sit or lie.

3. Maneuvering Exercises performed with empty draft apparatus. Course will include the following:

a. circular pattern (left or right)
b. 90° turns
c. a broad curve
d. movement through a narrow area not more than 12 inches wider than the widest dimension of the cart or wagon.
e. removable obstacle - dog waits while handler removes obstacle such as a gate or tree branch. Dog and apparatus proceed through the obstacle.

All exercises will be performed off leash. Handlers may repeat commands and/or signals. Except for harnessing and hitching, the handler may not touch the dog. Praise is permitted between exercises.

Awards. Rosettes for Qualifying Dogs.

Judging will be on a pass/fail basis. A dog must pass each exercise to qualify.

Unfortunately, these new guidelines frightened most of the competition, leaving people shaking their heads saying, "I can't teach my dog to do that!" Someone even went as far as placing obscene and harassing phone calls to members of the carting committee concerning the change in the carting rules.

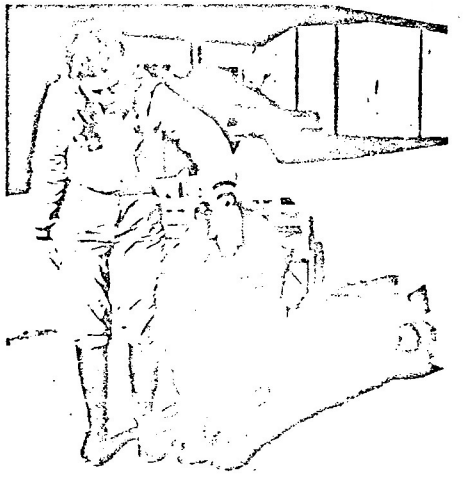
Actually, I found that these new maneuvers required very little additional training, and nothing any basic course in obedience would not teach. Yet these few additional commands did mark the difference between carting for fun and practical carting. If you have read my first article and followed my step-by-step training process to the letter, your dog now hauls forward, backs, accepts both cart and harness, gees, haws, and pulls weight while loving every minute of it. So you ask me, "How can he earn his keep?"

The Stay Command

I can answer that with one little word, "Stay!". That little command you taught your dog, way back in basic beginner's obedience, is probably the most important command in any draft dog's repertoire. Yet it was negligently omitted from the N.C.A.'s first list of carting regulations. In order to successfully complete a job with you, your dog *must* learn the meaning of the word "stay." This should be taught on lead, without cart and harness. Pose your dog in either a standing, sitting, or down posi-

tion on your left side, drop your hand in front of his eyes, and sternly say, "Stay." Step directly in front, and face the dog. Any deviation from the original position in which you left him, must result in an immediate correction back into that posture. Be consistent! If you l the dog to sit and he lays down, jerk him back up to a sit, even if he breaks 100 times. As he learns to stay, gradually back up. Do this until your dog is steady, even when you drop the leash, then with no leash at all. Those who learned "stay" in an obedience class are that much more advanced, but a good draft dog must take the staying exercise several steps further than is required to earn A.K.C. titles.

When your dog is a steady stayer at home, it is time to advance. Begin posing him in as many strange places and



Mt. Pleasant's Just Plain Nathan CDX demonstrates "Stand" with "Stay" signal.

situations as possible. Leave him, and do the silliest thing you can in front of him. Your chore, such as chopping fire wood, can look strange and inviting to a dog who has been told to stay. Yet, a cart dog who breaks and gets in the way of your saw, not only hinders your work, but endangers your life and his. Teach your dog to stay when you are out of sight. Begin by leaving the room and reappearing every 15 seconds to reassure him that you are not abandoning him. Increase the time out of sight as he learns to trust you when you promise to return. A good working dog who breaks his stay when you enter a store to make the purchase, is in danger of being hit by a car, or doing property damage with the cart, especially if he panics.

Lastly, build up the length of time he must stay in each position. The greatest length of required "staying power" needed to earn A.K.C. titles is the Open 3 minute sit and 5 minute down. This is not long enough for a good draft dog. The longer you can trust your dog to maintain a steady stay, the more time you can spend doing your shopping or

Nathan Stand-Stay front view

Nathan down-stay signal

chore. The dog's comfort is the reason for teaching the dog to stay in three different positions. While standing is the least comfortable position for the dog, it is the easiest position for you to harness and hitch him. For short delays, some dogs find standing more comfortable than sitting. A dog on "sit, stay" can stay longer, and is less likely to fidget forward or backward. Finally, in a down position, a well trained dog can wait well over an hour. If you know that you will be a while, unhitch the dog and leave him on "down, stay" next to the cart, preferably in a shady spot with a bowl of water. The dog can nap or comfortably watch the world go by while he waits. A dog that will hold a stay is a true asset as a draft animal or a companion without the cart.

Now that your dog will stay, let's look at the new regulations for carting again:

Number 1 — Harnessing is a "stand, stay."

Number 2 — In my first article, I described how to teach your dog to cart beside you. To slow down, speed up, or stop, you change your pace and the dog will adapt his to maintain his place at your side. The circles, curves and turns are extended gees and haws.

Number 3 — For this exercise, use another basic obedience command, "Come!" Let's say that you have sawed your firewood, and your dog has obediently stayed at a safe distance watching. Wouldn't it be nice, now, if your dog would bring the cart to the wood instead of you carrying the logs to the cart? A simple "Come" command should accomplish this. Once again, this should be taught on lead, without the cart or harness. Leave your dog on stay, walk to the end of the leash, call, "Dog, Come!" and reel him in to you. Gradually increase the distance using longer leads, until your dog comes consistently, then switch to off lead.

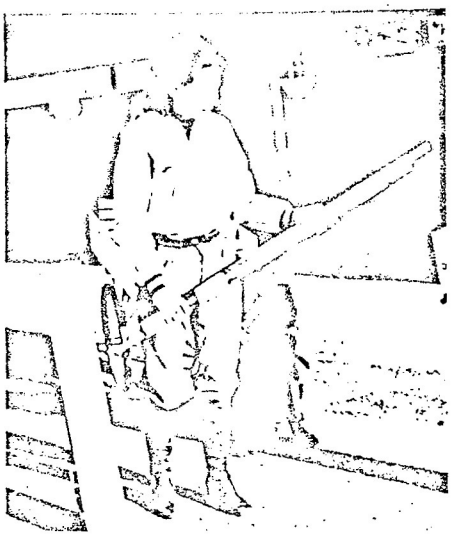
Number 4 — Maneuvering through a narrow gate is the problem. Every working cart dog will run into a similar problem sooner or later. It could present itself as a tree limb or some other obstacle blocking the road, or the garden gate of your house could be closed. This maneuver is little more than a combination of stay and come. In competition and practice, the Utility bar jump is ideal. Place the two posts 12 inches wider than the widest dimension of your cart. Position your dog and cart behind the bar making sure that they line up straight with the opening. Tell your dog to stay while you remove the bar or obstacle. You pass through, turn and call your dog. He should pass straight through to you. Tell him to stay again while you return the bar or close the gate.

The Proper Equipment

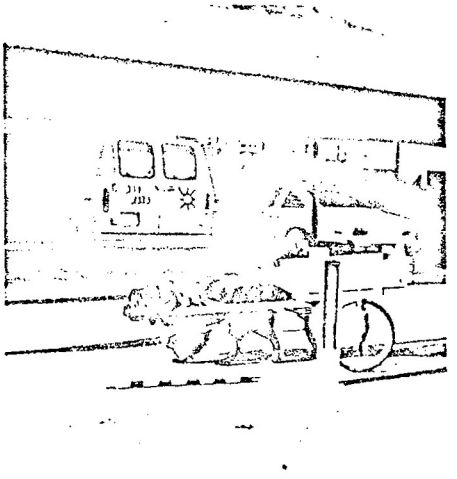
Prior to putting your dog to work, examine the nature of the job you wish to perform. What type of draft apparatus will suit your purpose best? Indian style travois are easy to build, but friction makes them hard to drag, and they put a great deal of pressure on your dog's back. Sleds and Sledges are fine for snowy regions, but must be converted or sit idle during warm weather. Sulky type carts, with a seat for riders, must be perfectly balanced, and should not be overloaded. Sulkys can be fun, but dogs were not bred to give people rides. A fidgety rider could cause serious injury to your dog. This practice of riders and overloaded carts is what led to a ban of cart dogs in Europe.

The most versatile type of cart is the box shaped utility cart. It not only hauls everything from bricks to groceries, but can carry riders or be turned into a parade float. There are two types of utility carts, the two-wheeler, and the four wheeler. The two wheeled variety is lighter, easier to transport, and easier to maneuver. Its drawbacks are the fact

#1 - line up with opening sit and stay. Mt. Pleasant's Refraf Zealot U.D.W.D. demonstrates "Through the Gate."



#2 - Zealot stays, while I remove obstacle, or open gate.

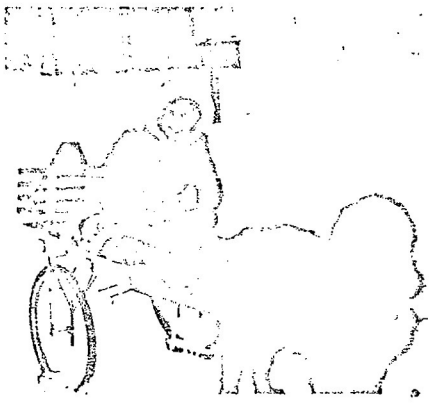


#3 - Zealot executes a "Come" through the gate.

that it *must* be perfectly balanced, the load must be evenly distributed, and the wheels must be the proper height to keep the cart level when hitched to each individual dog. A four wheeled cart is sturdier, the wheels can be any size as long as the shafts are placed to accommodate the dog's height, and the load does not need to be as evenly distributed. Unfortunately, four wheeled carts are bulky to transport. And more difficult to turn and maneuver.

Whether you decide to buy or make a two or a four wheeled cart, snow conversion is quite simple. There is no need to buy special runners and unscrew the wheels. Visit your local toy store and buy K-Tel Sno Boats*. Two wheelers will need one package, four wheelers will need two. Tie the cart wheels so they cannot rotate, strap a Sno Boat* on the bottom of each wheel and you are ready to out-maneuver the stalled motorists in the worst snow. On these winter excursions, I found that when my Newfoundlands were most comfortable, I was freezing. If you plan to stay out sledding for any length of time, I recommend investing in very warm clothing. Thermal underwear, a down filled vest or coat, down filled gloves, and rubber, fleece lined boots are almost necessities. In the world of insulated garments, anything filled with 100% goose down will provide the most warmth. As for your dog, he will probably love the cold. Remember, dogs prefer cooler weather plus he is working and generating heat.

Finally, if one dog can haul a given amount to weight, two dogs can haul twice as much. If your first dog is carting well, your second dog usually will learn the maneuvers quickly. Try to use two females, a female and male, or two males raised together since puppyhood. I found my two huge male Newfoundlands, Zealot (Mt. Pleasant's Refraf Zealot, UD, WD) and Nathan (Mt. Pleasant's Just Plain Nathan CDX), to be all that I could handle. Zealot would rather pull his cart than do anything else. I began taking Nathan along on lead when Zealot carted. By walking along side and watching Zealot cart, Nathan was ready to be hitched in one-fourth the time it took to train Zealot. The problem was that my two males would barely tolerate each other. They would haul together, but the moment they felt tired or thought that I was lavishing too much praise on the other, they fought. After talking with veteran "mushers," I learned that dogs usually love draft work. In their excitement, they become jealous of teammates and fights are not uncommon. If your dogs are very compatible, fine. But if you detect any jealousy, it may be smarter to use one at a time unless you enjoy breaking up fights and repairing a damaged cart.



*Mt. Pleasant's Just Plain Nathan CDX demonstrates Winter sledding using K-Tel Sno Boats**
**trademark*

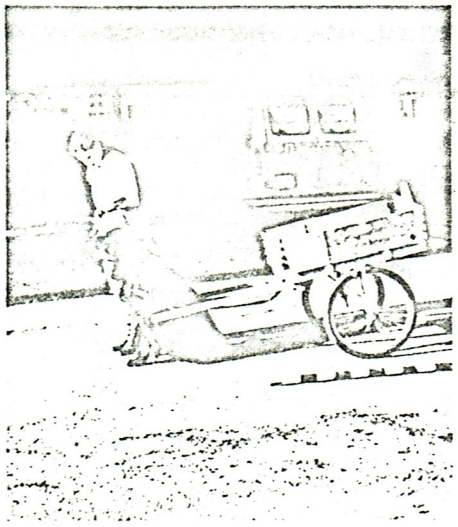
Hitching the Cart

There are two ways to hitch two dogs, brace (side by side) and tandem (one in front of the other). The brace method requires a shaft mounted in the middle of the cart, extending out between the two dogs. A bar must be mounted across the bottom front of the cart to widen the cart enough to accommodate two sets of traces.

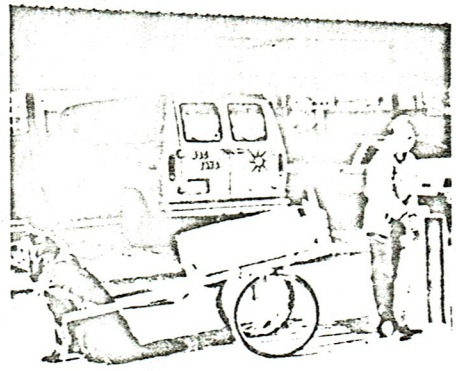
On a two wheeled cart it is necessary to add a shaft to each end of the bar (3 shafts) to distribute the weight evenly over both dogs. On a four wheeled cart, only one shaft down the center is necessary as long as the shaft is even with the point where it is hitched to the dog's harness. The tandem method requires the addition of an eyebolt to the tip of each shaft. Attach the lead dog's traces to these eyebolts.

In tandem the dog who works best, should take the lead position. In a brace, the best worker, or wheel dog, should be positioned closest to you.

For the person with more than two dogs, who is an excellent trainer, and enjoys something flashy, a team hitch is just right. In August I attended the Giant Schnauzer Specialty in Ravenna, Ohio. The Giant Schnauzer Club put on a beautiful carting exhibit consisting of individual competition, followed by a carting drill team. The grand finale was Harry Russ, designer and builder of my cart and most of the carts there, displayed his latest creation — a four wheeled cart drawn by a five dog team. To convert a normal cart into a multiple team hitch, run one shaft up the middle. To the end, add a cross bar, which swivels to facilitate turning, from the center of this bar, run another shaft (T shape). To the end of the T add another swiveling bar.



#4 - Zealot left on a sit-stay



#5 - I replace bar, or close gate while Zealot stays.

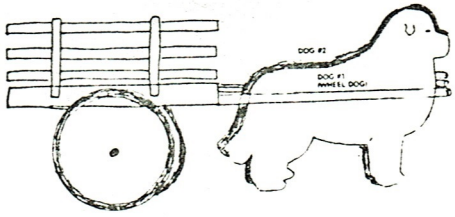
Team hauling not only requires a team of highly trained, compatible dogs; but the wheel dog and lead dog must be chosen with special care. While a trained team of dogs, in condition, can pull several thousand pounds; I hope the "gas crunch" does not push us to that point.

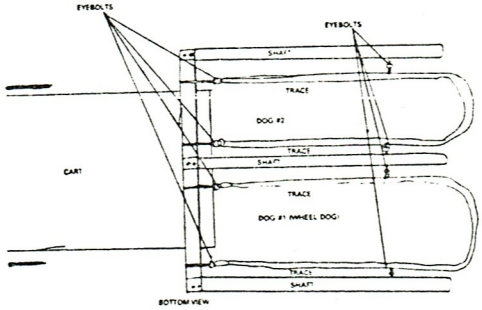
Carting Justification

If this gas crisis goes from bad to worse, sending civilization spiraling back to the horse and buggy days, think how superior you will feel knowing how to harness and hitch an animal. Meanwhile, take a look at your present lifestyle. If you live within a mile or two of a shopping center, begin building your dog's and your own endurance to the point where your dog can haul your weekly purchases home. The exercise will keep both of you in good health and physical condition. Carting will keep your conformation dog in top show condition. You need not worry about a properly padded harness rubbing off hair. If you live in a more rural setting, think of the many chores a dog and cart can perform. Around our yard my Newfs have hauled sand, bricks, cement; raked grass and leaves, firewood, water, and tools. If your child has a paper route, let your dog make the rounds instead of your car. Generally, my dogs have toted furniture to Goodwill, items to an auction, and our training club's paraphernalia as we marched in a parade. With a little imagination, you can dream up many innovative ways for your dog to replace your car.

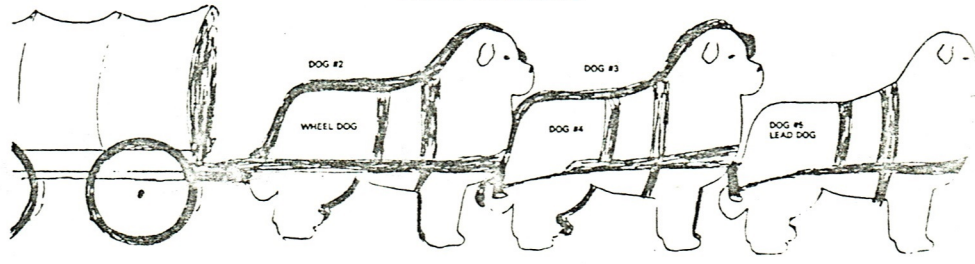
You will no longer feel so helpless in the face of skyrocketing oil prices and Middle Eastern terrorism. Your dog will love being with you and helping you make your own patriotic statement. The small amount of gas you save will mount up into dollars and cents. After all, dog food *is* cheaper than gasoline.

BRACE HITCH

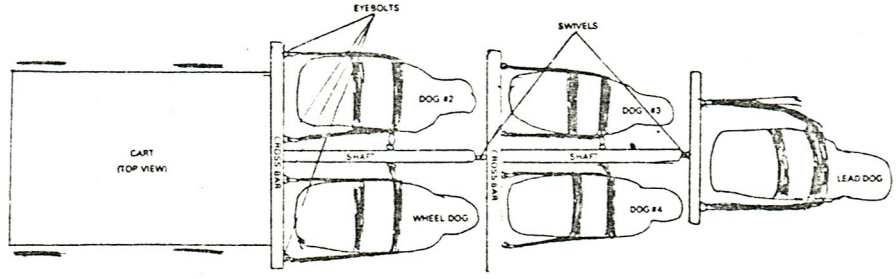




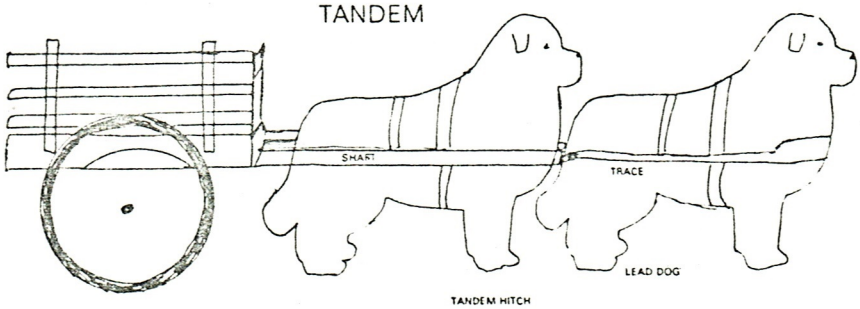
TEAM HAULING



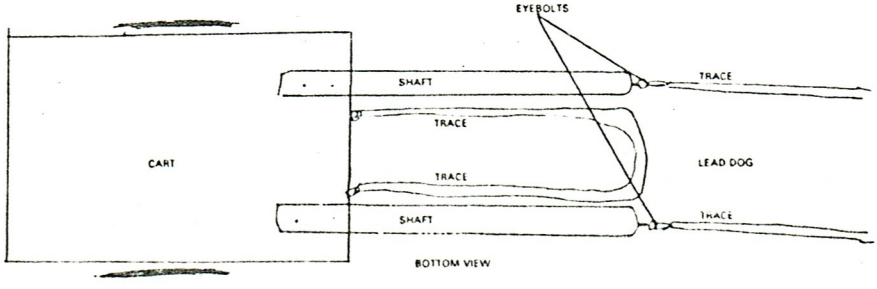
MULTIPLE DOG HITCH



TANDEM



TANDEM HITCH

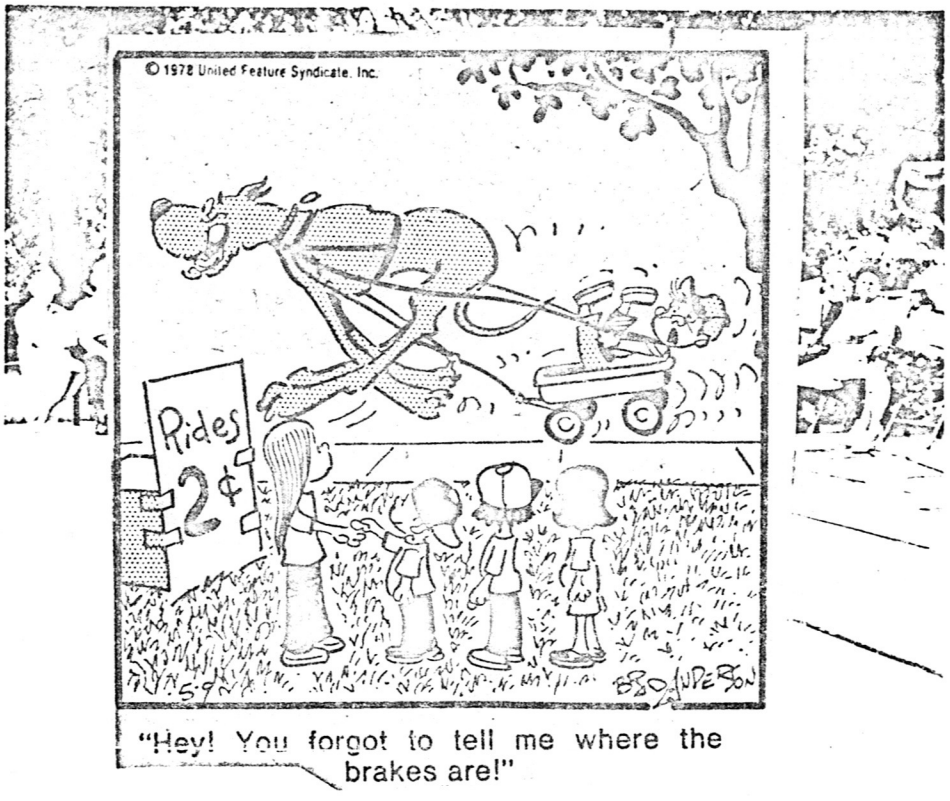


BOTTOM VIEW

CARTING FOR FUN

BY ROSLYN FOREMAN

Reprinted with permission of OFF-LEAD, December 1977.



"Hey! You forgot to tell me where the brakes are!"

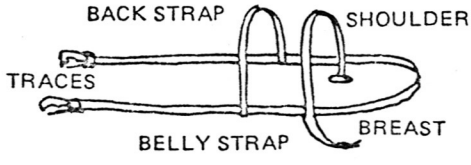
"Get a horse!" someone called to me from the busy highway, as my Newfoundland sat down instead of pulling his new dog cart forward as I had commanded. I knew that hackneyed phrase had signaled the age of the automobile and the death of the draft animal era. Yet I, like thousands of Americans today, am enjoying the revival of the working trade of dog carting.

Dog carting has periodically flourished and died ever since early man discovered that dogs were cheaper to keep and required less room than other beasts of burden. Poorly constructed carts, heavy loads, ill-fitting harnesses, inadequate diet, and outcries from humanitarians, prompted legislation banning the use of dogs as draft animals throughout the world. Today, thanks to humane, well-engineered carts and harnesses, dog carting is gaining popularity at an astonishing rate in the United States. While the traditional "draft breeds" (Newfoundland, Briard, Great Pyrenees, Bouvier des Flandres etc.) may learn carting quickly, with a properly fitted harness and cart, practically any large breed can enjoy a satisfying experience while pleasing his master.

Unfortunately, a novice to the sport of carting will soon discover that literature on the subject is scarce. There are no "How to . . ." books and few articles, as if our society has attempted to obliterate the infamy associated with the sport in the past. A beginner must proceed by trial and error.

First one must fit the cart to the dog, not vice versa! As it was commonly believed in the past, a cart is not a matter of nailing wheels on a box, nor is it as simple as hitching the children's little red wagon to your dog. Antique dog carts and old goat carts may have been built for use with an animal, but their use could mean pulled muscles or injury for your dog. Anyone planning to build a sulky or utility type cart, must locate the axle at the center of gravity. This way the axle supports most of the weight instead of placing it on the dog's back. A well-balanced cart hauling a 200 pound load, only exerts, at the most, four or five pounds of pressure on the dog's back Next it is very important to use wheels of the proper height. The wheels should be high enough to keep the cart level when hitched to your dog. If the wheels are too large, the load will shift forward putting extra weight on the dog's back. If the wheels are too small, the dog is actually pulling up hill.

A well-fitted harness is equally as important as a balanced cart. Unlike their hot predecessors, modern harnesses are made of nylon webbing. This fabric is cool, strong, and washable. A clean harness is less likely to cause skin irritations. The old sheepskin breast padding generated heat. Modern "fake fur" does not generate heat, protects the dog's coat, and is washable. Since the dog drives the cart forward by pushing against the breast strap, an exact measurement of the width of the dog's chest is necessary for optimum comfort. An ill-fitting harness will ride up on the dog's neck in a choking action. The shoulder strap keeps the breast strap in place. The dog bears the weight of the load in the middle of his back on the back strap. The traces secure the harness to the cart. The belly band, while optional, helps prevent the dog from becoming entangled in the harness. A set of reins can be made by riveting two thin straps to a "bark" type muzzle. An easier way is to snap two leashes to opposite sides of a choke collar. Most carting enthusiasts, however, prefer to demonstrate their training skill by using only voice commands in controlling the dog.



For the neophyte who feels competent enough to build his own cart and/or harness, the Newfoundland Club of America offers a pamphlet with step-by-step plans for several cart models for $3.00. Write to: Roger Powell, 5208 Olive Rd., Raleigh, N.C. 27606. If, like me, you are not so mechanically inclined, the following places specialize in custom carts and harnesses:

MR. HARRY RUSS
123 Yeager Avenue, Forty Fort, PA 18704

THE DIGAS COMPANY
10278 White Road, Linden, MI 48451

NORDKYN OUTFITTERS
PO Box 1118, Moses Lake, WA 98837

PEARSON'S TOWN & COUNTRY CARTS
2260 N. Walnut St., Muncie, IN 47305

When my new cart and harness arrived, I was like a child with a new Christmas bicycle. I could not wait for the snow to melt so that my Newfoundland, Zealot (Mt. Pleasant's Refraf Zealot, UD, WD), and I could "hit the road." Anxious as I was, I had heard of too many set backs and traumas to both dogs and owners who had tried to rush the dog into pulling the cart. Rare is the individual who can boast that the first time he hitched his dog to a cart, his dog took to it naturally. One bad experience can set training back months. Like anything worthwhile having, a happy carting dog is the result of gradual training and patience.

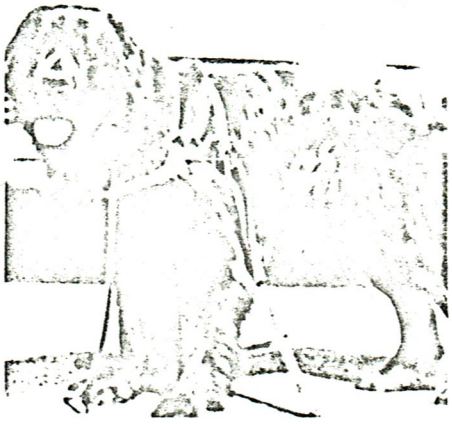
AND COMPETITION

TRAINING PROCESS

Drawing upon my own good and bad experiences, I have divided the training process into six steps from pet to cart dog.

STEP 1. Acquainting the dog with the harness.

I had Zealot wear the harness around the house and on short jaunts on his leash, dragging the traces behind him. A few dogs will object to wearing the harness and attempt to remove it. The trainer must not give in to the whining, wriggling, or rolling of the dog. A wise trainer should watch, to make sure the dog does not become entangled in the harness. Like his collar and lead, Zealot soon learned to accept the harness as part of his apparel, and behaved as if the harness was not even there. Most dogs adapt quickly to the harness, especially when it indicates walk time. After allowing a few days for adjustment, Zealot and I were ready for Step 2.



STEP 2. The dog gets the feeling of pushing against the harness.

Now I stood behind Zealot and held the traces. This step not only introduces the dog to the feel of something pulling backwards against his chest, but also to the fact that the handler is giving commands from behind him. It is helpful to have a friend lead the dog forward while you stay back, but it is not impossible to work alone as I did. If you own a dog who is always straining at the end of a lead, this step should prove easy. Unfortunately, Zealot likes to lag or lean on my leg as we walk. I decided to teach him that the command "Go" meant to move out in front. Working alone, I had to keep pushing and kneeing him into proper position. Working in interesting surroundings also encourages a dog to move out. Within a week, Zealot was happily dragging me over the snowdrifts to investigate every new bush and tree. In addition to the command "Go," step 2 is also the time to teach the dog to "Gee" (go right) and "Haw" (go left). If working alone, the dog should respond to a tug on the left or right trace. The harness training up until now can be started on puppies as young as nine months. Any serious carting should be postponed until the dog is older and more developed. Step 3 is critical to carting success, so a dog should be thoroughly harness broken before attempting any cartwork.

STEP 3. Acquainting the dog with the cart.

This step has ruined many potential carting dogs when not executed properly. The dog's realization that suddenly something is following very close behind, and the ensuing panic can mean disaster. Throughout step 3, the dog should be in harness, but *do not hitch him to the cart!* The dog's tail is the best barometer of how long the lesson should be. A wagging tail, held high, means the dog is happy so continue. The minute the tail drops, it's time to stop the lesson.

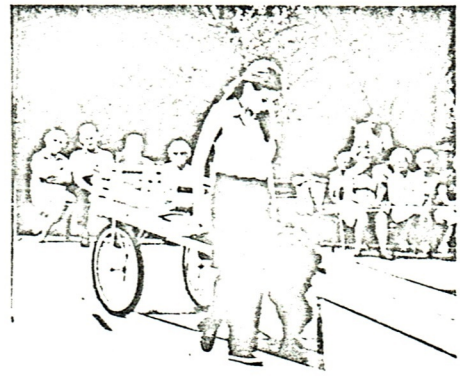
To begin step 3, I introduced Zealot to the cart. I let him investigate this strange new object. I let him sniff it all over. I pulled the cart around letting him hear the clatter of the wheels and see that it was not going to hurt either of us. Then I let him look it over some more. I allowed him all the time he needed to accept the cart as part of his normal surroundings.

Next I placed Zealot on a "sit, stay" and moved the cart up so that he was sitting between the shafts. The shafts resting on the ground, I stood directly in front of him heaping on lots of praise and reassuring him. If he became frightened, I allowed him to move out from between the shafts to freedom. I repeated this until he would sit comfortably between the shafts. Next I elevated the shafts to the point where they would eventually be attached to the harness, propped them up, and repeated the sitting procedure. Now I stood him in place. On the command "Go," my husband moved Zealot slowly forward. I followed alongside holding the shafts in place. At the first sign of panic, I held the cart still allowing Zealot to escape the fearful situation. I reassured him, praised him, then tried again.

Zealot gradually learned that the cart would not hurt him and that he could escape. I did not punish him for an escape, but every moment he remained between the shafts was filled with praise. While some reaction to attaching the cart in step 4 is almost inevitable, careful observance of step 3 can prevent a runaway cart, a terrified dog, or property damage.

STEP 4. The dog pulls the cart.

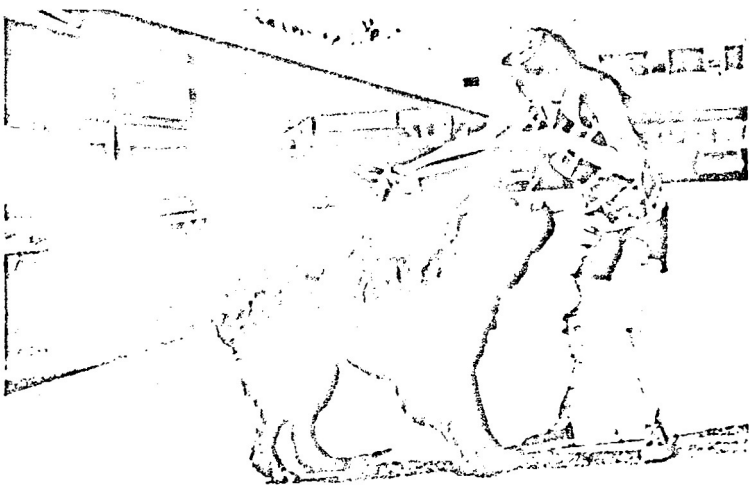
The moment of truth had arrived. Wearing his harness, I sat Zealot between the shafts, gave a strong command to stay, and attached the cart. I held the leash firmly in my hand and my husband held the back of the cart to steady it. On my command, Zealot took a few steps then lurched forward. His first impulse was to see if he could outrun the cart. I held him back reassuring him. Next he tried to shake the cart by walking sideways. Again I straightened him



out. After a few successful steps in the right direction, I unhitched him, letting the lesson finish on a note of accomplishment. Each day Zealot became less fearful and moved a greater distance. Soon I added the commands "Gee" and "Haw" which he had learned earlier. "Sit" proved to be the most comfortable way to stop.

STEP 5. The dog maneuvers the cart.

As Zealot gained confidence we left the sterile environment of our own dead-end street, and ventured out to meet several new problems. First, I had to buy a Slow Moving Vehicle sign to make my rig legal. We live near a very busy highway and shopping district. Zealot, through sharp corrections, had to learn that when the harness went on it was "serious up" time. Out in traffic there is no room for error. When people stopped to fuss over him, Zealot could not gush all over them. Then there was the nuisance of other male dogs defending what they thought was their property. Zealot, confined between the shafts, was virtually helpless. I began to carry a can of mace and a cane to beat off such attackers and to gain Zealot's trust in me to protect him.



Backing up can be fun.

A dog's day is never done.

STEP 6. The dog hauls weight in the cart.

Once any dog is pulling a cart, hauling anything from children to groceries is a matter of increasing the weight and distance gradually to the desired amount. Proper conditioning combined with a well-engineered cart equal a happy cart dog no matter what the load.

By early May, Zealot was such an enthusiastic cart dog that all I had to do was pick up his harness and he was racing to stand between the shafts. I received a premium list for the National Newfoundland Club of America Specialty. It featured Carting Class!

I suddenly realized that I would be competing against carting enthusiasts from all over the United States and Canada. I assumed that the other entries had seen and entered countless carting exhibits, and I had never even witnessed a carting display. Feeling handicapped by my newness to the sport, I decided to interpret the exercises the best I could, and to hope Zealot and I could hold our own among the best competition in the country.

I began training Zealot early each morning to avoid the heat of day. In performing the delicate maneuvers, Zealot's CD proved to be advantageous. While it is not absolutely necessary, I strongly urge that any prospective cart dog be familiarized with the basic obedience commands. A dog must know the meaning of stay, sit, and stand to be effectively hitched to the cart. I also found that Zealot's obedience training kept his attention on me at times when fear or curiosity almost got the best of him. I soon found out painfully why most experienced carters walk beside the dog slightly behind normal heel position. Since Zealot knew how to heel, I thought that by heeling him with the cart, he could take extra signals from my leg. Not so. It was my leg that got the signals from Zealot. Every time I stopped, Zealot rammed the but of the shaft into the back of my leg. Bruised all over, I found that, if I stayed back slightly, Zealot still could pick up my cue.

The figure 8 was easily adapted from the Novice obedience routine. Circle left and circle right were extensions of gee and haw. The transition from on lead to off lead came naturally. My only worry was how big these circles had to be. To be on the safe side I made big and little circles and figure-8's around all varieties of obstacles.

"Back up at least 4 feet" presented a challenge. I had never seen a dog walk backwards. Without touching him? That is what had to be done. My first reaction was to try shoving my 100 pounds plus of dog backwards. My first few attempts ended in exhaustion and frustration. Zealot always wound up in a sitting position. He was supposed to remain standing, which reminded me of his beginning obedience and how I taught him to remain standing for examination. With the leash attached to his collar, I threaded the other end in front of his rear legs to form a sling. Holding the collar end in my left hand and the sling end in my right, I pulled backwards on the collar saying the command "Back." Zealot had little choice but to step back. My right hand gently pulled up on the sling every time he tried to sit. After a few steps, I praised him and gave him a treat. Zealot was soon backing up without the sling. If he did not back far enough, I would repeat "Back." Backing became Zealot's favorite maneuver, and he would back to the end of the earth for that treat and praise.

Backing the cart presented another problem. My cart was designed so that the shafts slipped through loops on the harness and slid freely. While backing Zealot would hit the cart and was actually pushing it back with his rear. Although he did not complain, it looked very uncomfortable. To remedy this, I screwed eye bolts into the front of each shaft. I replaced the loops on the harness with bolt snaps. Now no matter what the direction the cart stayed in place. Win or lose, I felt that I had done my best to insure a presentation of our best performance.

The Newfoundland National Specialty was held at the Wagon Wheel Resort, in Rockton, Illinois, on June 17 and 18, 1977. Carting Class has not yet been sanctioned as a regular class. Maybe in the future it will become part of a Newfoundland working certificate. In the past, carting class had consisted of elegance and pagentry. Each entry was more glamorous than the one before, like floats in a parade. Handlers dressed in costumes to carry out a theme. The prize went to the most ornate cart. This year was to be different, with the emphasis being placed on the working ability of the dog. Decoration, while optional, only would account for 5 out of 200 possible points. When I arrived at the Wagon Wheel, it looked like every car, van, and trailer in the parking lot had a dog cart tied to the roof.

Friday night at 8:00, I went to pick up my arm band and guess what? I was number 101 and to be the first one in. Now I really would be "playing it by ear." The pagentry ranged from no decoration at all, to one cart totally bedecked in daisies while the handler's little daughter, wearing a large straw hat and long flowing pink gown, rode in the cart carrying a bouquet. I was dressed entirely in orange and turquoise, the same colors as my cart, as my contribution to "originality." Despite a severe thunder storm outside, a standing room only crowd had gathered inside to view the parade.

Silence fell over the crowd as I entered the ring and hitched Zealot to his cart. At first everyone thought my slow moving vehicle sign was a hilarious comment on the swiftness of the breed. As we began the first exercise, the loud speaker came on to explain to the audience what was to take place. Zealot could not hear my commands over the noise. After obtaining permission from the judge to wait until the noise had ceased, we completed the left circle, right circle, and figure-8, on lead then off lead. At last it was time to back up. I gave the command; Zealot happily obliged, and to my surprise a gasp of amazement arose from the audience. Since they liked the back up on lead so much, off lead I backed Zealot from the judge to the opposite edge of the ring. The crowd burst into applause and a multitude of flashbulbs went off in Zealot's face. Zealot was startled and looked up at me as if to say, "What did I do wrong?" I praised him, attributed it to an overzealous audience, and settled down to watch my opponents.

As I watched the following entries, it was my turn for amazement. Every Newfoundland deserved the points for attention and willingness. With tails wagging and happy faces they circled right, left, and did the figure-8 both on and off lead. But not one other Newfoundland would back up without being shoved or kneed. Most dogs, baffled, refused, were pushed back reluctantly, or sat down just as Zealot had done when I tried the same technique.

The last entry finished and it was time for the Grand Carting Parade, for the awarding of prizes, and to find out who would be the top carting dog of 1977. Outside the ring, I was situated in the awkward position, just past the entrance to the ring, in the narrow aisle. "Back" I commanded Zealot to get in line with the opening to the ring.

"Look!" That dog's doing it again." I heard someone shout from the audience. As we paraded around the ring the judge called out that first place went to number 101. That was us!

Afterwards, I was beseiged with people wanting to know everything from, was Zealot available for breeding, to would I give a talk on carting for their club? Mostly they wanted to know how I taught him to back up. One lady said that she had attended National Specialties for the past ten years and had never seen a Newfoundland walk backwards on its own. It's no secret, and it's not harder than teaching any other obedience exercise. Now that I have shared my experiences with you, perhaps at next year's Newfoundland National Specialty, I will no longer be known as the only "one with the dog that walks backwards."

GUIDELINES FOR CARTING COMPETITORS

Judging will be on a point system. Maximum number of points is 200, divided between on-lead and off-lead exercises. Points given are determined by completion, performance, and attention and willingness while performing the exercise.

The exercises are
- Circle to the right
- Circle to the left
- Make a figure-8 around stationary obstacles
- Back up at least 4 feet

These exercises are to be completed first on-lead, then off-lead. The judge will instruct you to start each exercise, and will indicate finish of exercise.

Because most Newf working activity takes place in situations where there are no restrictions on environmental noise or on communication between dog and handler, you are allowed and encouraged to orally communicate with your dog during the exercises. But because this is a test of your dog's ability to perform the exercises, you are not allowed to touch your dog during the individual exercises. Hand signals, or any other form of communication may be used, if you wish. At the completion of each exercise, you may touch your dog to praise him.

Please wait after being judged until all dogs have competed. Prizes will be awarded, and all dogs, carts, and handlers will take part in our Grand Carting Parade.

Good luck, and happy carting!

ALL-BREED CARTING COMPETITION

Saturday, February 2, 1980

Lehigh Valley Kennel Club's

CANINE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

INDOORS AT THE

AGRICULTURAL HALL, ALLENTOWN FAIRGROUNDS

ALLENTOWN, PA.

Please wait after being judged until all dogs have competed. Prizes will be awarded. The judge will be Donna Barto from the Allentown Dog Training Club. Below is a sample of the judge's work sheet. For more information, contact Karen Palmer, Giant Schnauzer Club of America Carting Chairperson, 2714 Delps Road, Danielsville, Pa. 18038, (215) 837-1963.

Exercise	Less than 50%		More than 50%		Maximum Points
Circle to Right	Unmanageable	☐	Handler adapts pace to dog	☐	20
	Upsets cart	☐	Dog pulls on lead too fast/slow	☐	
	Refuses	☐	Dog interferes	☐	
			Dog turns too wide	☐	
	Attention and Willingness				5
Same pattern for - Circle to Left . . .					25
Figure 8 around obstacles	Unmanageable	☐	Handler adapts pace to dog	☐	30
	Upsets cart	☐	Dog pulls on lead too fast/slow	☐	
	Refuses	☐	Dog interferes	☐	
			Dog turns too wide	☐	
			Bumps obstacle	☐	
	Attention and Willingness				5
Back Up	Unmanageable	☐	Dog interferes	☐	10
	Upsets cart	☐	Dog becomes tangled	☐	
	Refuses	☐			
	Attention and Willingness				5
				ON-LEAD SUBTOTAL	100
			All above exercises repeated off-lead for	OFF-LEAD SUBTOTAL	100
				TOTAL NET SCORE	200

To the Editors:

This is actually more a letter to NCA members than it is a letter to the editors of *Newf Tide*.

An unfortunate mistake was made in the publication of the NCA Working Dog Committee's Draft Proposal in *Newf Tide* vol. 10 (2). The editors of *Newf Tide* were not responsible in any way for the mistake.

The boldface title at the top of the first page on the Draft Proposal should have read NEWFOUNDLAND DRAFT PROPOSAL DEVELOPED; "carting" was incorrectly substituted for "draft" in the title published. The Working Dog Committee has worked hard to develop a test which it hopes will test our Newfs' abilities at draft work. The members of the Working Dog Committee realize that carting is an important aspect of draft work and most people will become involved in draft work through carting. But the draft work abilities of our dogs extend beyond carting to several other types of draft work. The Draft Proposal has been written so that the tests can be performed with any of several draft apparatus: cart, sled, toboggan or travois. We would be happy to add additional apparatus if we find that Newfies and their owners are using something other than the four apparatus we have listed.

We wish to encourage Newfy owners to work with their dogs in as many ways as possible. Such work can only increase that good feeling of team work which comes from working closely with a dog. We also encourage people to think of the proposed Draft Tests as "draft" and not just "carting."

A final point: the Draft Proposal is a joint effort of the entire Working Dog Committee and all members of the committee should receive recognition for the work they have done.

Sincerely,
Roger A. Powell
Working Dog and Carting Committees

Proposed

REGULATIONS FOR DRAUGHTING TRIALS

For qualifying the dog and handler will perform each of the following:

1. Basic Control Exercise: Dog is expected to perform this exercise as specified in the AKC Obedience Regulations for Heel Free, the Long Down and the Recall. The Recall will require a proper Finish. All dogs must perform on the first command.

2. Harness and Hitch: Dog and handler enter the ring, handler places dog on stay. Handler leaves dog and goes to ring entrance to get harness and returns to dog. Dog stands on command for harnessing. Handler harnesses dog. Dog heels with handler to draught rig and stands to be hitched. When hitched, dog and handler move into position indicating dog is ready to work.

3. Control with Distractions: Dog will perform both parts of the exercise with an empty draught rig.

A. The dog is moving {hauling} in a simple heel next to the handler. Another dog on leash with handler passes in front of the dog while it is moving. The distractor must cross within approximately 10 feet of the dog and keep moving on a straight path until well clear of the team being tested.

B. The dog is moving {hauling} in a simple heel next to the handler. The distractor carrying a metal pie pan and metal spoon, approaches the team from the front and bangs the pan with the spoon at least once when approximately 10 feet from the dog. Passing to the side of the team, the distractor bangs the pan at least once when approximately 10 feet from the team. Passing to the rear of the team, the distractor bangs the pan at least once when approximately 10 feet from the team. The pan must be banged 5 times.

4. Basic Command: Dog will perform exercises A through D while hitched to an empty draught rig Each exercise will be performed on command and/or signal once with the handler next to or in front of the dog.

A. Haul forward

B. Slow down

C. Stop

D. Stay {2 minutes}, handler out of sight. Dog may be left standing, sitting, or lying down and must remain in that position until the handler returns.

Dog will also perform the following:

E. Back up a distance of 4 feet.

5. Maneuvering: Performed with empty draught rig. Course will include the following:

A. Circular pattern {left and right}

B. 90^{o} turns

C. A broad curve

D. Movement through a narrow area that is 12 inches wider than the widest dimension of the draught rig

E. Removable obstacle, dog waits while handler removes obstacle such as gate or tree branch. Dog and rig proceed through the obstacle. Exercise D and E maybe combined.

6. Distance Freight Haul: Handler must load draught rig with the appropriate load to the size and strength of his dog taking into consideration the type of draught rig being used. A simple 1/2 mile, non-obstacle, distance course must be traversed. A Judge must accompany the handler and have the authority to stop this exercise if the load is too great for the dog under the working conditions.

All exercises will be performed off-leash. Handlers may repeat commands and/or signals and/or praise except for exercises 1 and 4 A,B,C,D. Except for harnessing and hitching the handler may not touch the dog. Exercise 4E must be done while hitched if using a wheeled vehicle. For sled, toboggan, or travois; the dog is to perform the exercise prior to hitching, backing into position to be hitched. The Cross-Country Test must be held out of doors. All other exercises maybe held indoors or out of doors but not both. Praise is permitted between exercises.

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB OF AMERICA

DRAFT TEST REGULATIONS

Approved January 1991

April 1991 Edition

BERNESE MOUNTAIN DOG CLUB OF AMERICA

DRAFT TEST REGULATIONS

PURPOSE

The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Draft Tests are a series of exercises designed to develop and demonstrate the natural abilities of purebred Bernese Mountain Dogs in a working capacity involving hauling. The Bernese Mountain Dog has historically functioned as a draft dog in various capacities, and performance of these exercises is intended to demonstrate skills resulting from both inherent ability and training which are applicable to realistic work situations. Efficiency in accomplishment of tasks is essential. It is also desirable that the dog evidence willingness and enjoyment of his work in a combination of controlled teamwork with his handler and natural independence.

GUIDELINES

All American Kennel Club (AKC) Dog Show Rules and Regulations, American Kennel Club Obedience Regulations, and the Constitution and By–laws of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America (BMDCA) shall apply to all persons and dogs except as these BMDCA Draft Test Regulations direct otherwise. A copy of each of these shall be at the site of the Draft Test and available to the judges, handlers, Draft Test Committee and personnel. A copy of these BMDCA Draft Test Regulations must also be at the Test site and available to the aforementioned persons. It is the responsibility of each handler to be familiar with these materials prior to the Draft Test.

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GENERAL REGULATIONS

Chapter 1. Administration

Section 1. Application to Hold a Draft Test

a. BMDCA Approval: Written approval of the BMDCA Draft Work Committee (DWC) must be obtained to hold a Draft Test at which dogs earn BMDCA draft titles. Only the BMDCA and its recognized regional clubs may sponsor Draft Tests.

b. Application: Application forms are available from the DWC Chairman. Applications shall be sent to the DWC Chairman and must include:

1. Name of the Draft Test sponsoring club.
2. The date of the proposed Draft Test.
3. The name and address of the selected site.
4. Entry limits for each class.
5. Name and address of the two (2) judges and their qualifications for judging a Bernese Mountain Dog Draft Test.
6. Name, address and phone number of the Draft Test Chairman and the Draft Test Secretary.
7. Names of additional Draft Test Committee members.
8. The certification that all BMDCA Draft Test Regulations will be followed.
9. The guarantee that all equipment, personnel and other required provisions will be available at the Draft Test.
10. The signatures of the Draft Test Chairman and the Draft Test Secretary.
11. A detailed map and description of the selected Draft Test site including the half mile Freight Haul course.
12. A $20.00 administrative fee payable by check to the BMDCA.

c. Time of Application: Application to hold a Draft Test must be made at least six (6) months prior to the date of the proposed Draft Test and must be accompanied by a self addressed stamped postcard. The DWC Chairman will return the postcard upon receipt of the application. Approval or rejection of the Draft Test Application by the DWC will be communicated to the Draft Test Chairman in writing by the DWC Chairman within thirty (30) days of receipt of the completed application.

d. Judging Materials: The DWC will provide at the time of Draft Test approval:

1. Judging Worksheets – to be filled out by each judge evaluating each team's performance and given to the handler at the conclusion of judging.
2. Data Worksheets – a concise means of recording statistics and information about each dog and draft rig necessary for the Draft Test. The worksheets must be returned to the DWC as part of the Draft Test Report.
3. Judges Reports – to be filled out for each dog, signed by both Judges and the Draft Test Secretary on the day of the Draft Test and returned to the DWC as part of the Draft Test Report.

Section 2. The Draft Test Committee

a. Members: The Draft Test Committee of the sponsoring club shall consist of a minimum of three (3) people, one of whom shall be named Chairman. The Draft Test Committee Chairman and Draft Test Secretary must be members in good standing of the BMDCA.

b. Official BMDCA Representatives: The Draft Test Committee shall act as official representatives of the BMDCA and must see to the enforcement of these Draft Test Regulations. Any violations of these Draft Test Regulations must be reported by the Draft Test Committee to the DWC in writing and included with the Draft Test Report.

c. Draft Test Secretary: The Draft Test Committee shall appoint a Draft Test Secretary. The Draft Test

Secretary shall take all entries and contact each entry, after the closing date, to verify their entry, the time of judging, address of the site and names of the judges at least one week prior to the date of the Draft Test. At the Draft Test the Secretary must have available for inspection:

1. The BMDCA Draft Test Regulations.
2. American Kennel Club Dog Show Rules and Regulations.
3. American Kennel Club Obedience Regulations.
4. The Constitution and By–laws of the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America.
5. The complete entry forms of each exhibitor.

The Draft Test Secretary shall be responsible for sending all return–requested materials to the Draft Work Committee Chairman within ten (10) days following the Draft Test. These include:

1. Judges' Reports.
2. Data Worksheets.
3. Two (2) marked catalogs.
4. Reports on Test violations, excusing of a dog or team, etc.
5. Complete entry forms.

Section 3. Duties of the Draft Test Committee

a. Plotting the Freight Haul Course: The Draft Test Committee is responsible for plotting the Distance Freight Haul course prior to application to hold the Draft Test.

b. Premium List: The Draft Test Committee shall print a Premium List after receiving approval to hold a Draft Test. This Premium List shall be made available to any Bernese Mountain Dog owner interested in entering a dog in the Draft Test. Two (2) copies of the Premium List shall be mailed to the DWC Chairman at the time of distribution to the public. The Premium List shall contain the following:

1. The statement "Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Draft Test".

2. A list of the officers and board of directors of the test giving club with the address of the secretary.
3. A list of the members of the Draft Test Committee including the Chairman's address and phone number.
4. The name, address and phone number of the Draft Test Secretary.
5. The names and addresses of the judges.
6. The name of the Draft Test veterinarian and whether the veterinarian will be in attendance or on call.
7. The date, time and location of the Draft Test.
8. The entry limit for each class.
9. The closing date for the entry.
10. A list of awards or prizes.
11. The statement:
    "Entrants are responsible for obtaining the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations and being familiar with them."
12. The name and address of the DWC Chairman from whom the Draft Test Regulations may be obtained.
13. An AKC type entry form including the statement:
    "I (we) acknowledge that the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations have been made available to me (us), that I am (we are) familiar with their contents and that I (we) agree to abide by these Regulations at this BMDCA Draft Test. I (we) understand that I (we) enter a dog at this BMDCA Draft Test at my (our) own risk."

c. Equipment and Supplies: In order to differentiate Draft Tests from obedience competition the use of obedience equipment is not recommended. The Draft Test sponsoring club will provide:

1. a. BMDCA Draft Test Regulations
   b. AKC Dog Show Rules and Regulations
   c. AKC Obedience Regulations
   d. Constitution and By–Laws of the BMDCA
2. Ropes and stakes or ring gates necessary to define a ring with minimum dimensions of 75 feet by 75 feet.

3. A minimum of four (4) markers to define the maneuvering course. The markers should be large enough to be clearly visible to both handlers and spectators.
4. A removable obstacle, ideally an object which might be found in everyday carting situations.
5. A minimum of two (2) markers to define a narrow area.
6. A lightweight load – a blanket or quilt is recommended.
7. Weights for the freight load, preferably of known and labeled weight. A variety of different weights should be available in sufficient quantity for all the dogs entered. Bags of dog food are ideal.
8. A tape measure at least six (6) feet in length.
9. A spring scale which can weigh at least fifty (50) pounds. The spring scale must have a maximum reading pointer.
10. Two distractions, one primarily auditory and one primarily visual.
11. A stop watch or watch to time stays.
12. Markers for the Distance Freight Haul course.
13. Exhibitor numbers.
14. A catalog identifying each entered dog as in an AKC show catalog.

Recommended:

1. A system by which spectators may be silently informed as each team passes or fails each exercise.
2. A diagram of the maneuvering course clearly posted at ringside.

d. Stewards: A minimum of four stewards shall be provided to assist the judges. The judges are in sole charge of the Draft Test area until their assignment is completed. Stewards may act only on the judges' instructions.

e. Veterinarian: The services of a veterinarian must be available during a Draft Test. The veterinarian should be present at the Draft Test or within a short drive if a telephone is available at the Draft Test site. The Draft Test

Regulations have been devised to present a minimum hazard to dogs and handlers but Draft Test Committees are urged to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of all involved.

f. Notification of Changes: If the Draft Test Committee is informed at any time prior to the opening of its Draft Test that an advertised judge will not fulfill his engagement to judge, then the Draft Test Committee shall substitute a judge. The substitute judge must be approved by the DWC Chairman who shall be notified either by telephone or by mail. The same shall apply to emergency changes of site or Draft Test officials. If the request is made by telephone, a letter to the Draft Work Committee Chairman must follow with a full explanation. The Draft Work Committee Chairman must then notify the rest of the Draft Work Committee of the changes and the reasons they were requested.

g. Prizes: Test sponsoring clubs are encouraged to offer ribbons and/or trophies for passing teams.

h. Limitation of Entries: The Draft Test Committee may limit entries. If entries are limited the Draft Test Secretary must accept all entries received prior to the closing date. A random drawing shall be held within 48 hours of the closing date to determine which entries shall participate in the Draft Test. Dogs which have not earned the title offered in the entered class shall be given preference over dogs which have earned the title but wish to continue to compete at that level.

When the advertised limit has been drawn, all remaining entries, subject to the same preferences, shall be assigned a position on an Alternate List corresponding to the order in which they were drawn.

If the entry limit is not reached in one class the extra slots may be assigned to the other class in order to maximize entries.

The Draft Test Secretary shall immediately notify all entries of the results of the draw. Alternates may attend and compete if a team does not attend or is unable to compete, leaving an entry slot empty.

i. **Final Jurisdiction:** In all matters not related to the judging the Draft Test Committee shall have final jurisdiction. All situations not clearly resolved by these Regulations shall be resolved by reference to the AKC Dog Show Rules and Regulations and the AKC Obedience Regulations.

Section 4. Discipline

Discipline for violations of these Regulations shall be under provisions of the BMDCA Constitution and By–Laws. The Draft Work Committee shall consider past violations when considering applications for Draft Tests by clubs which made those violations.

Chapter 2.
Judges and Judging Guidelines

Section 1. Judges

There shall be two judges who should be chosen based on experience with canine draft work, preferably with Bernese Mountain Dogs. Criteria to be considered include training and working with Bernese Mountain Dogs in draft work, previous judging in Draft Tests and experience with Bernese Mountain Dogs in other working roles.

Section 2. Standardized Judging

Standardized judging is of great importance. Judges are not permitted to vary the exercises but it is recognized that the Draft Tests are intended for performance on natural terrain and may require minimal adaptation to fit the site available. Judges are expected to walk with the dogs and handlers on the Distance Freight Haul. In no case, however, should the judges add, delete or change any requirements of the Draft Tests.

Section 3. Pre–Judging Responsibilities

a. **Arrival:** Judges should arrive at the Draft Test site at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of judging in order to have time to check draft equipment, determine Freight Haul weight loads and plot a pattern for the maneuvering course.

b. **Explanation of Ring Procedure:** Immediately prior to the start of judging the judges should explain the ring procedure and patterns to all handlers.

Section 4. Judging Guidelines

a. **Pass/Fail:** All judging is on a pass/fail basis.

b. **Decisions:** Two judges evaluate the teams. Judges shall reach a mutual decision regarding the passing or failing performance of each team. Judges' decisions are final in all cases. Full discretionary power is given to the judges to withhold any or all prizes.

c. **Excusing a Dog:** The judges must excuse any dog that attempts to attack any person in the ring. The judges must excuse a dog that attacks another dog or that appears dangerous to other dogs. The judges must excuse any dog that is lame or appearing to pull weight in excess of its ability, any team whose equipment is inadequate or faulty, any handler who willfully interferes with another team, or any handler who abuses his or her dog in the ring.

A Judge marking a dog "excused" must state the reason in his Judge's Report.

d. **Misbehavior:** Any display of fear or nervousness by the dog, or any uncontrolled behavior of a dog such as snapping, barking or running away from its handler, whether it occurs before, during or between exercises, must be penalized according to the seriousness of the misbehavior, and the judge may expel or excuse the dog from further competition in the class. A dog that fouls the ring receives a failing mark in that exercise.

e. **Group Exercises:** A maximum of eight (8) teams at a time may be judged in the group exercises.

f. Evaluations: Dogs shall be judged for willingness, ability, enthusiasm, naturalness as a team, and smoothness of performance. Each exercise shall be judged on a pass/fail basis. Upon completion of all exercises, each handler shall receive a written evaluation from both judges of the team's performance in each exercise.

g. Test Reports: Judges' must complete the Draft Test Reports which must be returned to the DWC Chairman by the Draft Test Secretary.

h. Problems: All judging situations not clearly resolved by these Regulations shall be resolved by reference to the AKC Dog Show Rules and Regulations and the AKC Obedience Regulations.

Chapter 3. Eligibility and Conduct of Handlers and Dogs

Section 1. Entry Requirements

a. Definitions: The term "DOG" applies to dogs of both sexes. The term "TEAM" means a handler and a single dog.

b. Purebred BMDs: The Draft Test is open to purebred Bernese Mountain Dogs registered with the AKC, United Kennel Club (UKC), States Kennel Club (SKC), Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) or any other foreign registry.

c. Age: The Draft Test may be entered by dogs two years old or older on the day of the Draft Test.

d. Bitches in Season: Bitches in season are not permitted to compete. Entry fees shall be refunded upon receipt of a veterinary certificate stating an entered bitch is in season at the time of the Draft Test.

e. Dogs That May Not Compete: No dog belonging wholly or in part to a Draft Test judge, Draft Test Secretary or to any member of their immediate family may enter in any Draft Test at which such person officiates or is scheduled to officiate.

f. Waiving Basic Control: The Basic Control Exercise shall be waived for dogs which have earned an AKC, UKC, SKC or CKC Companion Dog (CD) title if a copy of the CD title certificate is sent with the entry form.

g. Weight Certificates: Each handler shall send a veterinarian's certificate stating the dog's name and weight to the Test Secretary with the entry form. This certificate must be dated within the 60 days prior to the Draft Test date.

Section 2. Handlers

a. On Time: Teams should arrive at the Draft Test site at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of judging to allow time for the equipment check and Freight Haul weight determinations. Teams must be on time or forfeit the entry. Judges are not responsible for waiting for any handler or dog.

b. Multiple Commands: Multiple commands, signals and praise may be used in all the exercises of the Draft Test, except as specified.

c. Food and Toys: A handler shall not carry or offer food or toys during the Draft Test exercises.

d. One Handler: Dogs shall be exhibited by the same handler for all exercises except; if a handler has two or more dogs entered, each dog must have a separate handler for the group exercises when judged in the same group.

e. Control Outside of Ring: All entered dogs must be on leash or crated when not competing.

f. Training on the Grounds: Training on the Draft Test grounds is not permitted. Dogs, entered or not entered, may be hitched to draft rigs to aid in unloading and transport of equipment from vehicles to the competition area, as this is a typical and practical application of draft work.

g. **Warm-up:** Entered teams are allowed a warm-up as permitted in AKC obedience competition – approximately 5 minutes, all on leash, not hitched to a draft rig – prior to the ring exercises. Prior to the group exercises dogs may be hitched to their draft rigs and warmed up on leash for an additional 5 minutes to verify and adjust the balance of the freight load.

h. **Risk:** The handler entering a dog in a Draft Test does so at his own risk and agrees to abide by the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations.

Section 3. Equipment

a. **Handler's Responsibility:** Handlers provide their own draft rigs, harnesses and tie-downs or other means of securing a load in their particular draft rig for the Distance Freight Haul and the Loading and Unloading Exercise. The same draft rig must be used for all exercises. The condition of this equipment is the responsibility of the handler. Judges may excuse a team from competition if the equipment is deemed inadequate or faulty. Handlers may bring their own freight loads if they wish. Attractive or thematic loads are encouraged, e.g. milk cans, flowers, etc. No person or animal of any age may serve as a freight load.

b. **Draft Rigs:** Since Bernese Mountain Dogs live in a variety of climates and perform draft work in a variety of situations, any of the following draft rigs may be used: cart, wagon, sled, toboggan or travois. Each of these must be equipped such that the draft rig cannot run up on the dog when hauling downhill.

Chapter 4.
Competition Site and Spectators

Section 1. Site

a. **Ring:** The ring for all exercises except the Distance Freight Haul shall be rectangular and a minimum of 75 by

75 feet. This ring shall be defined by ring gates or ropes and stakes. The ring entrance shall be a minimum of six (6) feet wide. Only members of the Draft Test Committee, Judges and Stewards shall have unlimited access to this area. Handlers and dogs are permitted in the area only when they are called for testing. Spectators are not allowed in this area at any time.

b. **Freight Haul Course:** The half mile Distance Freight Haul Course must be clearly marked.

Section 2. Spectators

a. **Applause:** Because Bernese Mountain Dogs working under natural conditions may often be in places where there are a variety of everyday sounds, spectators are encouraged to applaud and cheer for the performing dog. Spectators and dogs not entered are not to interfere with the performance in any way. Judges' discretion is to be used to determine interference.

b. **Dogs Not Entered:** All dogs not entered in the Draft Test must be leashed or crated at all times.

Chapter 5.
Procedures and Scheduling

Section 1. Equipment Check

Judges shall check all draft equipment to be used in the Draft Test prior to the start of judging. The type of draft rig and the width of the draft rig at its widest point shall be recorded on the Data Worksheet for easy reference during the Test. The judging schedule should allow time for this.

Section 2. Freight Haul

a. **When to Determine Freight Weights:** Freight Haul weight determinations shall be made prior to the start of

judging. The judging schedule should allow time for this. Weight determinations may be made by Draft Test Committee members, stewards or judges but must be supervised by at least one of the judges.

b. How to Determine Freight Weights: The appropriate weight load is measured in pounds using a spring scale with a maximum reading pointer. Part or all of the weight is derived from the weight and drag of the rig. The measurement taken is of the start-up weight of the draft rig. On level terrain similar to that of the Freight Haul course, a spring scale is attached to the rig at the same point where the harness attaches. The rig is then moved by pulling slowly and steadily on the spring scale while assistant(s) support the shafts. The rig is pulled until a constant speed is reached, then stopped and the spring scale read. The distance required is approximately 20 – 25 feet. Weight must be added to the rig until the spring scale registers the correct load as calculated and recorded on the Data Worksheet. Measurements should be taken at least twice for each draft rig to assure consistent and accurate readings.

The weight of the empty draft rig on the spring scale, the weight of the loaded draft rig on the spring scale and a description of the cargo should be recorded on the Data Worksheet for easy reference during the Test.

c. Scheduling: The Distance Freight Haul shall immediately follow the Group Stay exercise and shall start with the teams still in the ring. Draft Test committees should bear this in mind when laying out the ring location and Freight Haul course.

Section 3. Number of Dogs

The Draft Test Committee should plan for the judging of four to five dogs per hour. This figure includes time for the Group Stay and the Distance Freight Haul.

Chapter 6.
Qualifying Performances and Titles

Section 1. Qualifying Performances

a. Pass/Fail: A dog must pass all the exercises in a class at one Draft Test to qualify and earn a draft title.

b. Other Criteria: The primary quality to be emphasized in Draft Tests is ability to perform the assigned tasks. However, dogs are also to be judged for willingness and smoothness of performance. A dog that effectively completes his task within a reasonable time period and without physical assistance should be scored as passed if it has performed willingly. A dog that does everything correctly but appears to be in fear of severe correction from its handler shall be scored as failed.

Section 2. Titles

a. Novice Draft Dog: Each dog with a passing performance in Novice Draft shall earn the BMDCA title Novice Draft Dog, to be abbreviated NDD.

b. Draft Dog: Each dog with a passing performance in Open Draft will earn the BMDCA title Draft Dog, to be abbreviated DD.

c. Certificates: BMDCA draft title certificates will be mailed to the owners of passing dogs following the receipt and subject to the review of the Draft Test Report by the Draft Work Committee.

REGULATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE AND JUDGING

Chapter 1. Classes

Section 1. Classes Defined

a. There shall be two classes – **Novice Draft** and **Open Draft**

b. Novice Draft: The Novice Draft class shall be for dogs which have not earned the Novice Draft Dog title (NDD) or have earned the Novice Draft Dog title (NDD) but have not earned the Draft Dog title (DD). All exercises except the recall, harnessing and group stays are performed on leash, however, the leash must be visibly slack and is not to be used to physically guide the dog during the exercises. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash will result in a failing performance. Guiding between exercises is permitted. Dogs may be kept on leash when waiting in the ring before and after the Group Stay and when in the ring to receive awards.

c. Open Draft: The Open Draft class shall be for dogs which have earned either the Novice Draft Dog title (NDD) or the Draft Dog title (DD). All exercises are performed off leash. Guiding by the collar between exercises is permitted. Dogs may be kept on leash when waiting in the ring before the Group Stay and when in the ring to receive awards.

Chapter 2. Draft Test Exercises

Section 1. Basic Control

Overview: Prior to hitching, the dog demonstrates an ability to respond to commands from the handler. The dog is expected to heel and come when called.

a. Heel

Novice Draft: Prior to the start of this exercise the draft rig and harness will be brought into the ring.

Open Draft: Draft rig and harness remain outside the ring near the ring entrance.

The dog is expected to heel within arms' length of the handler's left side at all times. The handler may not touch his dog but may command and encourage the dog to remain within arms' reach at all times. It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit by the handler's side at halts. One judge will call commands but both judges will score.

Judge's commands to the handler are: Are you ready?, forward, slow, fast, normal, right turn, left turn, about turn, halt, exercise finished. Judges will determine the heeling pattern and order of their commands.

Failing performance:

1. Dog does not heel within arms' reach of handler at all times.
2. No change of pace.
3. Handler adapts to the pace of the dog.
4. Handler physically guides or touches the dog.
5. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.

b. Recall

The recall is performed off leash for both Novice Draft and Open Draft classes and will be 30 to 50 feet in length. The dog must execute the sit/stay for the recall with a single command and/or signal.

Novice Draft: The handler leaves the dog, proceeds to a position in the immediate vicinity of the draft rig and faces the dog.

Open Draft: The handler leaves the dog and proceeds out of the ring to bring the draft rig and harness into the ring, while the dog maintains the sit/stay. The handler faces the dog from a position in the immediate vicinity of the draft rig.

The handler calls the dog. The dog is expected to respond to the first recall command. Extra hand signals and vocal commands and praise are allowed after the dog has begun to move. The dog is expected to come to the handler and stop near enough to be touched. It is desirable, but not required, for the dog to sit upon reaching the handler.

Judge's commands to the handler are: Are you ready?, leave your dog, call your dog, exercise finished.

Failing performance:

1. Handler gives more than one stay command.
2. Dog does not stay.
3. Dog does not come on first command.
4. Dog does not come to handler.
5. Dog remains out of reach.
6. Handler physically guides or touches the dog.

Section 2. Harness and Hitch

Overview: Dog demonstrates willingness to be harnessed and hitched to draft rig.

Novice Draft: In the event that the Basic Control Exercise has been waived, the draft rig and harness are brought into the ring prior to the start of this exercise and positioned by a steward. Dog and handler enter the ring, dog on leash, and position themselves directly in front of the draft rig. The leash is removed. The exercise starts with the dog and handler directly in front of the draft rig.

Open Draft: In the event that the Basic Control Exercise has been waived, the dog and handler enter the ring, off leash. The handler places the dog on a sit, stand or down stay. The handler leaves the ring and brings the draft rig and harness into the ring and positions them immediately behind the dog. The exercise starts when the dog and handler enter the ring.

The handler harnesses the dog. The dog cooperates for harnessing. Handlers of Novice Draft dogs then leash their dogs again. The handler hitches the dog to the draft rig. The dog cooperates for hitching. When hitched, the handler indicates readiness to proceed.

If the draft rig is a sled, toboggan or travois not designed for backing, the backing exercise (described below in Practical Draft Work, Basic Command – Section 3a) shall be performed prior to hitching, backing into position to be hitched.

Judge's commands to the handler are: Are you ready?, harness your dog, (back your dog), hitch your dog, exercise finished.

Failing performance:

1. Dog does not stay while draft rig is brought into ring (Open).
2. Dog is uncooperative and/or resists harnessing.
3. Dog is uncooperative and/or resists hitching.

Section 3. Practical Draft Work

Overview: The team demonstrates working ability. The team encounters situations and distractions such as might be met under everyday conditions.

The handler may work beside, behind or in front of the dog, or any combination of these. The key factor to be judged is the exhibition of teamwork as well as completion of the exercises and willingness, ability, enthusiasm and smoothness of performance.

Judges may require the Practical Draft Work exercises to be performed in any order. The different components of each exercise do not need to be performed consecutively. At the beginning of these exercises the judge will ask "Are you ready?" and at the conclusion the judge will state "Exercise finished."

Except as specified, the Practical Draft Work exercises are performed with an empty draft rig.

a. Basic Command

The team shall haul forward at a normal pace, slow down and move at a slow pace for a minimum of ten feet and come to a halt. Novice Draft dogs shall back up a distance of at least one foot. Open Draft dogs shall back up a distance of at least four feet. If the draft rig is a sled,

toboggan or travois not designed for backing, the backing exercise is performed prior to hitching, backing into position to be hitched. The direction of backing should be approximately straight. Two minutes shall be allowed for the backing exercise and multiple attempts may be made.

Judge's commands to the handler are: Forward, slow, halt, back your dog.

Failing performance:

1. No change of pace.
2. No halt.
3. Dog does not back up the required distance.
4. Dog substantially changes direction while backing.
5. Dog upsets draft rig.
6. Handler physically guides or touches the dog and/or draft rig.
7. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.

b. Control With Distractions

While the team is working, two distractions, one primarily auditory and one primarily visual, shall occur approximately 10 feet from the working dog. When the distraction appears, the dog may stop what it is doing and/or watch but is not allowed to divert from the course it is following or to move the draft rig if the rig is at that moment stationary. The handler may speak to the dog with instructions concerning the distraction. If the dog has stopped to watch the distraction, the handler is to encourage the dog to proceed with the exercise. When the distraction has passed the handler is to instruct the dog to continue the exercise it may have stopped.

Distractions are to be arranged at the discretion of the Test giving club and should be distractions that might occur in everyday situations. Possible appropriate distractions are:

<u>Auditory</u>	ringing bell	musical instrument
	car or bicycle horn	banging pans
	crinkly food bag	squeaky toys
	radio	

<u>Visual</u>	camera flash
	another animal on leash
	ball or toy being thrown
	person riding a bicycle
	person on horseback

Stewards may perform distractions under direction of the judges or the judges may perform the distractions themselves.

Failing performance:

1. Dog changes direction in response to a distraction.
2. Dog moves a stationary draft rig in response to a distraction.
3. Dog chases distraction.
4. Dog is fearful of distraction.
5. Dog upsets draft rig.
6. Handler physically guides or touches the dog and/or draft rig.
7. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.
8. Dog barks out of control or shows aggression.
9. Dog refuses to resume the exercise it was performing after the distraction is gone.
10. Dog gives a failing performance in reaction to a naturally occurring distraction, even though the dog passes the official distractions.

c. Loading and Unloading

The team shall halt. The dog must stay in a stand, sit or down position. After the dog has been told to stay a steward or judge approaches. The steward or judge greets the handler, gives the handler a lightweight load (a blanket or quilt is recommended because it can be adjusted to suit different draft rigs) and then leaves. The handler secures the load in or on the draft rig. The team then pulls the load to another part of the ring where they again halt. The dog must again stay, as above. After the dog has been told to stay another steward or judge approaches. The steward or judge greets the handler, greets and pats the dog and then receives the load from the handler. If the load should shift the handler may stop to reposition and secure the load.

Judge's commands to the handler are: Halt, load your cart, forward, halt, unload your cart.

Failing performance:

1. Dog does not halt on command.
2. Dog does not stay.
3. Dog does not cooperate for loading.
4. Dog refuses to pull loaded draft rig.
5. Load falls off of draft rig.
6. Dog does not stay in position when greeted and patted
7. Dog shows aggression or shyness when greeted and patted.
8. Dog does not cooperate for unloading.
9. Dog upsets draft rig.
10. Handler physically guides or touches the dog and/or draft rig.
11. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.

d. Maneuvering

The team is required to perform:

a. Circular patterns to the right and left.

b. 90 degree turns to the right and left.

c. Movement through a narrow area that is 12 inches wider than the widest dimensions of the draft rig without touching the objects defining the narrow area.

d. Removable obstacle – the dog waits while handler removes an obstacle such as a tree branch or child's toy. The team then proceeds past the obstacle.

c. and d. may not be combined.

Judges will direct handlers as necessary through the maneuvers. Judge's commands to the handler are: Right turn, left turn, circle right, circle left, halt, remove the obstacle, forward.

Failing Performance:

1. All maneuvers not executed.
2. Any contact by the dog, handler or draft rig with the obstacle or the objects defining the narrow area or any other part of the course.
3. Dog does not wait while handler removes obstacle.
4. Dog upsets draft rig.
5. Handler physically guides or touches the dog and/or draft rig.
6. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.

Section 4. Group Stay

Overview: The dogs demonstrate their ability to remain on a stay while hitched. This is a group exercise.

Novice Draft: The stay is off leash, with the handler standing across the ring from the dog.

Open Draft: The stay is off leash, with the handler out of sight.

Dogs are hitched to their draft rigs which have been loaded for the Distance Freight Haul and may be placed in a stand, sit or down position. Handler's armbands, weighted with leashes, shall be placed behind the handler, beside the draft rig. The stay command and/or signal is given once and no other commands or signals may be given during this exercise. The stay is for three minutes. The handlers shall return directly to the dog's side.

Judge's commands to the handlers are: Position your dogs for the stay, leave your dogs, return to your dogs, exercise finished.

Failing performance:

1. Handler gives more than one stay command.
2. Dog changes position e.g. from a down to a sit or stand.
3. Dog moves out of place.
4. Dog barks or whines repeatedly.

Section 5. Distance Freight Haul

Overview: The teams traverse an outdoor course with the dogs hauling loaded draft rigs. This is a group exercise.

Novice Draft: The appropriate weight load is between 10 and 15 percent of the dog's weight.

Open Draft: The appropriate weight load is between 25 and 30 percent of the dog's weight.

The handler is responsible for the proper loading of the draft rig. The handler loads the draft rig with the appropriate weight load for his dog and draft rig as measured with the spring scale. Stewards/volunteers may assist under the handler's direction. Judges must confirm the proper freight load from the Data Worksheet. A 1/2 mile distance course over the natural terrain of the area is traversed. A judge must accompany the team. The judge has the authority to stop the exercise if the load is too great for the dog under the working conditions. The handler may physically guide or touch the dog or cart in unusual trail conditions only with approval of one of the judges. Control is an important part of this exercise. Handlers should be prepared to slow down, or stop and wait at the request of a judge or to remain part of a group.

Failing performance:

1. Handler loads draft rig in a manner which causes it to become significantly unbalanced when moving.
2. Freight load exceeds the dog's capacity to pull comfortably and safely.
3. Dog upsets draft rig.
4. Handler physically guides or touches the dog and/or draft rig without judge approval.
5. Dog refuses to move the loaded draft rig.
6. Dog refuses to accompany handler.
7. Team does not complete the course.
8. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash.
9. Dog or draft rig collide with any object.

CARTING

Our Bernese Mountain Dogs have been pulling carts for 2,000 years, so, although it might be new to you and to your Berner, it is certainly nothing new to the Breed. Though not an expert in carting, I do want to give you a few pointers on how I taught my dogs to pull a cart, in the event it might help you.

The prime pre-requisite, **number one** factor, is that the dog have good hips. We do not want to hurt them and they want to please us so much, that Berners will do anything that we ask of them, regardless of any discomfort they may experience. Wait for the OFA x-rays at the end of two years to see the condition of your dog's hips.

In the meantime, to adjust your dog to the harness, have him wear it around the house. You can have him accompany you, wearing his harness, while you pull the cart full of debris, garbage or firewood, around the yard. **Sign both of you up for a good Obedience course.**

Later, when the dog is under FULL CONTROL off-lead, you can re-attach the lead to the dog and tie a small cardboard box (to the harness) about 8-10 feet behind the dog and walk him at heel making huge, wide turns around the yard. All the while PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE.

The next step is to get the dog used to the shafts...two broomsticks work very well. Attach the sticks/shafts to the harness in whatever way is best. Some people attach a pair of small wheels to the sticks, although I have never tried it. Be sure the dog is on lead just in case he tries to bolt, as they do feel confined between the shafts. Once again, PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE. Only when the dog appears excited to pull the shafts, should you go on to the next step.

Now let the dog pull the shafts while YOU pull the cart behind the dog. Be aware...the cart may spook the dog! If your dog likes kids (and whose doesn't) put a 2-5 year old in the cart and YOU give him a ride. The dog senses that the child enjoys this and the child usually dishes out tons of natural praise, but **do not stop your praising.**

Once you and your dog have, over a period of time, perfected the above steps and he is comfortable with the cart moving with you behind him, proceed to the next step. But remember, **DO NOT RUSH IT !!!**

Harness the dog, attach the lead to the dog, attach the cart shafts to the harness, put a light weight child in the cart and PRAISE, PRAISE, PRAISE. and CART, CART, CART...slowly!!! In the winter you can substitute a sled for a cart. One of my girls pulled 850 lbs in competition on snow.

The biggest obstacles I have found are:

1. Dog panics when in the shafts; tries to turn and bumps into the shafts which cause more panic.
2. Dog feels that the cart is chasing him and tries to run away from it.

>>>>

3. Rushing from one step to the next. **DO NOT RUSH THE TRAINING. DO NOT RUSH THE DOG**. One lady I know swore that nothing would upset her dog and insisted that I attach her dog to my cart. Stupid me, I believed her and did. The dog panicked and put cart, lady and me into the bushes. We couldn't get the dog anywhere near the cart ever again! Most problems can be avoided by "easy does it".

4. Don't ever allow the pulled object to hit the dog's rear legs. BMD's are smart enough to NEVER let that happen again.

5. Teaching the dog to back up the cart in a straight line.

Training the dog to back up is done completely separate from the cart. This is best accomplished in a long, narrow space. If you have one, use a hallway or make a narrow one using a wall and a crate or another solid item to make a passage about 28" wide and 4' to 5' long. Outside you can use a wall and a pole balanced on 2 five gallon pails. I use (2) 6 ft 2" x 2"s for poles and 4 five gallon buckets (another use for dump pails). Get some treats and call the dog into the passage, shoulder depth, move treat over the dog's head, stepping into the dog and saying "BACK". (Dog backs up ONE PAW and gets treat.) When the dog learns that "back" means to walk in reverse, you can increase the length merely inches at a time. The dog, at some point, will try to turn around, if this happens call the dog forward and decrease the distance the dog must reverse. They will learn in time that "BACK" means straight. This exercise must be learned one paw at a time, not 6 steps at once.

If you are using a wagon (with four wheels instead of a cart with two wheels) behind the dog, drill a hole through the wagon bed and the axle brace; drop a large bolt through the hole so that the wagon will not jack-knife. (This is permitted in competition.)

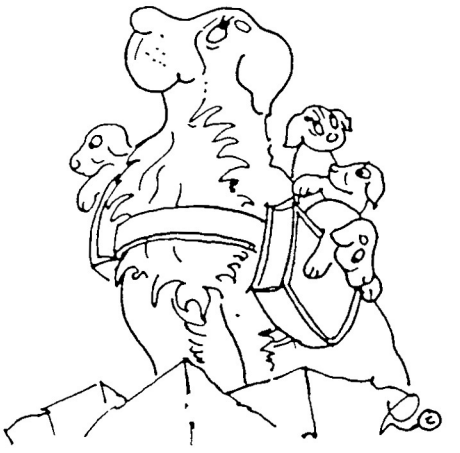
Backing is so difficult to teach, that I have been tempted to use a travois in competition as dogs are not required to back them up !

Carting is a fun, useful thing to do with your dog. My Berners bring in firewood, groceries and dog food; they take out garbage and shavings; they pull carts in parades and pull their grooming table, crate and tack box into dog shows.

I cannot over-emphasize that each of the above steps must be done slowly to accustom the dog to this new experience. Do not start a next step until you and your dog have perfected the step before. It may take as long as six months to get your dog to progress from step to step to carting !

Adele Miller
BMDCW
1997

BACKPACKING WITH BERNERS



Backpacking with Bernese Mountain Dogs is a wonderful way to enjoy time with them, get beneficial exercise, and savor nature's beauty. Nothing is nicer than to take a weekend off from dog shows, head for the mountains, and admire Bernese in their natural setting. To obtain maximum enjoyment from the outing, though, be it a day hike or an extended trip away from civilization, some advance planning is necessary.

First, keep in mind that many Berners are accustomed to sleeping most of the day while owners are at work. If you are planning a long trip, get your dog and yourself in condition by walking every day and taking day trips on weekends several months before your long trip. Plan to set an easy pace to get the most pleasure for both owner and dog. Obedience training is a wise idea; work on come, heel, and sit and down stay commands.

Trim the dog's nails back before the trip to avoid possible snags and torn nails. Remember the dewclaws, if not removed. Keep the dog up to date on all vaccinations, especially for rabies. A dog tag with your name address and telephone number (including area code), and a tattoo for identification (trim away hair that may have grown over the tattoo) are also good insurance.

Certainly, your Bernese can help to carry the load! Backpacks, like saddle bags for dogs, are available in several sizes. The best design that I have found is available through Sporting Dog Specialties, 15 Turner Drive, Spencerport, NY 14559 (716 352-1232). Puppies, of course, should not carry any weight until they are fully matured. However, wearing just the pack occasionally will acclimate older puppies to its feel.

Do not overload your dog's pack. For a day trip, Juster carries two quart-sized bottles of chilled water and his water dish. I also tuck in a roll of paper towels and zip-locking plastic bags for cleanup. On longer trips, I depend on Juster to carry his own food, bowls, brush and comb, and paper towels. Because water would add too much weight, we plan to backpack in areas where I know that safe drinking water is available. Check with the specific park authority ahead of time.

On the trail, Juster is fed several hours before starting out in the morning so that he isn't hiking on a full stomach. I water him at every rest stop with water that I carry in my own canteen (or water he carries on a day trip). Also at every rest stop, I check him from head to toes (particularly the pads of the feet) for burrs, foxtails, cuts, bruises and other problems. Be especially alert for ticks, which carry Rocky Mountain spotted fever (nationwide)* . When we stop in the evening, Juster gets a thorough brushing to remove tangles, dirt, thorns, and other accumulations. This care also is quite soothing to potentially sore muscles and helps the dog to relax for the night.

Try to choose an area suited to your dog's and to your experience. No climbing Mt. Everest or hiking the entire Appalachian Trail on your first trip! Avoid such hazards as hunting and trapping areas, cliffs, falls and waters with strong currrents.

In areas that many people and dogs use, in those regulated by law, and in potentially dangerous or unknown terrain, keep your beloved Berner on leash. The retractable Flexi-leash, 20-30 feet long, provides freedom of movement for both dog and owner. They are available from Sporting Dog Specialties and are in most pet supply stores.

If you do allow your Berner off-lead time, do not let the dog wander out of eyesight. Discourage your dog from barking and chasing wildlife and livestock you may encounter. (what, Berners?!) Also try to keep your hiking companion out of mountain streams and ponds. Dogs (and people) that drink what looks like cool, crystal-clear water stand an excellent chance of picking up Giardia, an intestinal protozoan parasite that causes chronic diarrhea and other gastrointestinal distress.

Anytime that you swim with your Berner make oh so very sure that it is in a body of water that you know to be safe. A top field trial Lab in California drowned recently when it was dragged out to sea in a strong current. A lovely Canadian Newf died several years ago when she became entangled, unseen, in fishing nets below the surface of the water. And a friend lost her dual champion German Shorthaired Pointer when the dog dived into a river and impaled himself on a branch of an underwater log. Horrible stories, but they emphasize the point: Keep yourself and your Berner safe!!

Backpacking with your Berner can be a wonderful experience for both of you. The confidence and trust that you two build in each other as you hike up hills, slide down slopes, leap over logs, and find new life in beautiful places will bond you and the dog closer than you ever thought possible.

Sally Henderson
BMDCA Alpenhorn
June '88

* watch for tiny Deer ticks/Lyme Disease!
ed.

DOGS AT WORK!

The Draft Test is one of the events at the Specialty that always draws a crowd of both knowledgeable and curious spectators. For the newcomer, the National provides an opportunity to learn about the working history of our breed and how we keep that heritage alive.

Why do we do it?

Whether you enjoy your Berner as a family pet, an exciting show dog, or a willing obedience partner...the structure and temperament you cherish today has its roots in the working farmhand role played by the early dogs. Many of us have seen the photographs of a Berner or two hooked to a cart, pulling a load of milk cans or kids through mountainous terrain. In addition to being nostalgic and fun to look at, these images tell us much about the Bernese. They tell us that the BMD must be physically strong and sound, well trained, adaptable, and of good disposition. They must work well with their handler in a variety of situations that might be encountered on the farm or on their way into town. Draft work is a way to involve ourselves in the heritage of the breed and a way to gain a fuller understanding of our dogs~not to mention that for most Berners, it is a job they love to do! The Draft Test is designed to insure that the Bernese Mountain Dogs of today are a tribute to the working traditions of the past.

The Classes: Novice and Open

Dogs exhibiting in the Novice class will perform their exercises on leash, with the exception of the recall, harnessing and hitching, and group stays. When the dog has successfully completed all exercises in one Novice draft test, he will be awarded the BMDCA title of Novice Draft Dog (NDD). The Open class is for dogs that have already earned their NDD title. All exercises are performed off leash, except that dogs may be kept on leash while waiting in the ring for the group stay or for their awards. A dog earns his Draft Dog title (DD) upon successful completion of one test at the Open level. Both of these titles may also be earned in a brace, in which the two dogs are hitched side by side and work as a team to earn the title brace novice draft dog (BNDD) or brace draft dog (BDD).

How it works

Teams will be judged on whether the exercises are completed smoothly, safely, and with demonstrated ability and cooperation. Unlike obedience classes, where a score is obtained based on how well a dog completes the exercise, draft work is done on a pass/fail basis. The most frequent problem areas are a tight leash, failure to halt on command, and bumping the cart into the narrows obstacle. You'll usually find a posting board set up near the entrance to the ring which will be updated to keep the audience informed on which exercises have been passed by each dog.

What do they have to do? The Exercises:

Basic Control- This exercise demonstrates the dogs ability to respond to commands from the handler, a critical necessity as a hitched dog out of control poses a danger to itself and others. While unhitched, the dog is expected to heel within arms' length of their handler at all times, adjusting pace accordingly. After the heeling pattern, the dog will be placed in a stay, and the handler will leave the dog to perform a recall from approximately 30 to 50 feet away. The dog is expected to respond to the first call but additional hand signals, verbal commands, and praise are permitted once the dog has begun to move. Note that the cart is inside the ring for novice dogs and outside the ring for the open dogs- this will come into play in the next exercise.

Harness and Hitch- The dog must show a willingness to be harnessed and hitched, and cooperate with the handler. In novice, the exercise starts with the dog and handler positioned directly in front of the draft rig. In open, the dog and handler proceed to the harness and hitch location designated by the judges and the dog is placed on a stay command. The handler will leave the ring, bring in the draft rig and harness, and position them immediately behind the dog. In addition to uncooperative behavior, an open dog that does not stay while the rig is brought into the ring, or a dog that is incorrectly harnessed or hitched will have a failing performance. More than one nervous handler has had trouble with correct use of the harness on draft test day!

Practical Draft Work- On the judges commands, the team will demonstrate their ability to move forward, make right and left turns, perform circular patterns in both directions, change pace, and back up (ever try backing up with a trailer hitched to your car?). All must be accomplished without physical guidance of the dog/rig by the handler or a tight leash (novice) and without upsetting the rig! Since this exercise is designed to emulate the variables a working draft dog would run into, an auditory and a visual distraction will be introduced. The dog may stop what it is doing and look at the distraction, but may not divert its course or move the rig if it was in a stationary position. The team must demonstrate that the dog responds to a halt command, stays in position while a light load is placed in the cart and the dog is greeted by the judge or steward, and cooperates during unloading. In addition, the team must demonstrate maneuvering ability through a narrow area, and removal of an obstacle.

Group Stay- The handler gives the stay command (once) and the dog is expected to remain in the sit, stand or stay position the handler has left it in for three minutes. In novice, the handler remains inside the ring, in open the handler is out of the dogs sight.

Freight Haul- The team will pull a loaded draft rig for 1/2 mile uphill and down over varied terrain. Novice dogs will carry a load of 20 pounds; open dogs will carry a load equal to their weight rounded to the nearest 10 pounds.

At the end of the day, it's been a long haul...
Give a cheer for the exhibitors, the dogs, the judges, and the stewards who have all been working to keep the heritage alive.

CARTING WITH YOUR CANINE

Carting? What's that?

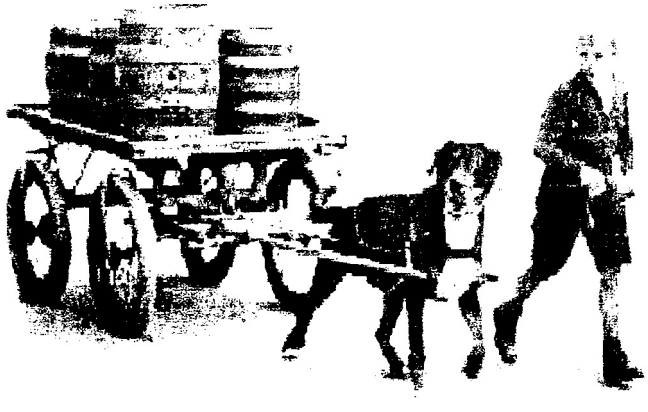
Canine carting, or drafting, involves one or more dogs with a handler pulling a cart, wagon, travois, sledge or sled. What it's NOT: drafting is not a weight-pulling or speed contest. Draft dogs are used in practical situations to haul freight, do farm work and make deliveries. Many of our draft dogs enjoy giving wagon rides to small children.

Takes a special breed of dog to do it, right?

Any breed of dog can be trained to do drafting work. We've seen 8-inch tall Papillons pulling a cart (not with a small child in it, though). However, the breeds most often trained in this work are large dogs from the AKC Working Group. Rottweilers and Saint Bernards make excellent draft dogs. Pound for pound, a dog is stronger than a horse!

Why use a dog to pull a cart?

Many of the traditional drafting breeds were owned and employed by small farmers or businessmen who couldn't afford a horse, or didn't want a horse competing with their "cash crop" of cows or sheep for scarce grazing. Breeds such as Greater Swiss or Bernese Mountain Dogs, Newfoundlands, Bouviers des Flandres have historically been used to haul dairy products, fish, textiles, or garden produce to market.



What titles can I get?

The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America awards Novice Draft Dog (NDD) and Draft Dog (DD) titles. At present, drafting titles are only recognized by parent clubs which have test standards and qualified judges. If your breed club does not issue draft titles, you might work through another breed club to establish rules specific to your breed and to test your dogs.

How can I get started?

See attached information for helpful websites, drafting resources, and contact information for drafting equipment vendors. There are many companies that offer books and equipment about the growing sport of canine drafting.

How much does all that cost?

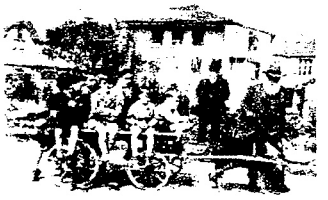
Harness begins at about $30; price depends on style and material. Carts can be designed for competition or for freight hauling, and can be as basic or elaborate as you like. The price range is too wide to quote an average. Many vendors offer completed carts as well as component parts (wheels & shafts, for example) for those who choose to build their own cart.

Who can I talk to if I'm interested?

Steve Dudley	(520)	BMDs
Jim Bemus	(520)	BMDs
Rick Redpath	(602)	Newfs
Larry Jech	(623)	Saints

Ch. Deerpark Didi's Oso Baron, CD, NDD
1991-1997
Owned by Steve & Meri Dudley, missed by all

Drafting Resources

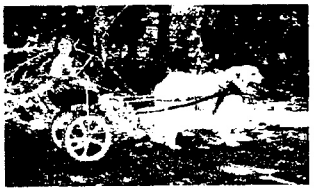


Books & Videos

Intro to Carting video (purchase from Dog Works)
Newfoundland Draft Work, 2nd ed. (Consie Powell)
Draft Equipment Guide (published by the Newfoundland Club of America)
Linda Franklin's Notebook on Cart Training
Cart Training Manual $10.00 + $3.70 S&H to von Russ Giants, 123 Yeager Ave, Forty Fort, PA 18704-4031

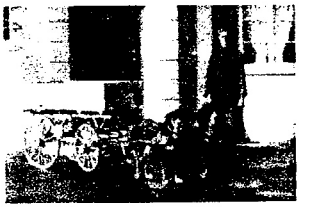
Websites

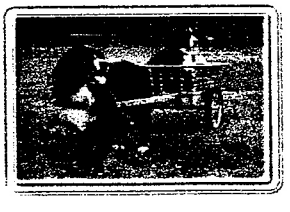
Bernese Mtn Dog Draft Regs:	http://www.barney.org/BMDCAdraft/start.html
GSMD Draft Regs:	http://www.gsmdca.org/draft_page.htm
Newfoundland Drafting:	http://kendaco.telebyte.com/~marylouz/draft.html
Working Saint Bernards:	http://www.akc.org/clubs/saints/work.dog.htm#draft
Working Bouvier Association:	http://www.atlantic.net/~msadler/NAWBA.html
Draft Regulations for Rotties:	http://www.rott-n-chatter.com/cartingregs/
Carts & Cart Plans:	http://members.home.net:80/k9carts
Upcoming drafting events:	http://www.mindspring.com/~atlnewfl/working.html
Info & Vendors:	http://www.bond.net/~warrickw/carting.html
	http://home.earthlink.net/~bready/carting.html
	http://www.erols.com/gr8rswis/IntroCarting.htm
	http://www.rott-n-chatter.com/oldcarting.html

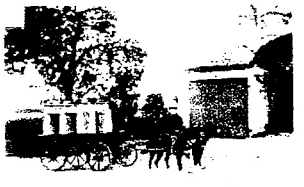


Vendors

Brown's Cart & Harness Co. (Ontario, Canada)	k9carts@home.com
Direct Book Service (Wenatchee, WA)	dgctbook@cascade.net
Dog Works Inc. (Stewartstown, PA)	dogworks@cyberia.com
Linda Franklin (Maple Park, IL)	44W431 Rt 64, 60151-8552
Graham Carriage Works (Portland, OR)	carriage@pacifier.com
K-9 Sulkys (Anaheim, CA)	k-9sulkys@rott-n-chatter.com
Miniature Wagons (Westerly, RI)	401-596-7507
Moonlight Mtn Kennel & Supply (Indiana)	moonlight@cl-sys.com
New England Draft Adventures (Massachusetts)	StarNewf@aol.com
Nordkyn Outfitters (Graham, WA)	nordkyn@nordkyn.com
Sacco Carts, Sue Meinzinger (Washington)	gooddogs@cnw.com







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Stewartstown, PA 17363-9432
1-800-787-2788 (717) 993-6644 Fax: (717) 993-3698

SO... YOUR DOG WANTS TO PULL!

... AN INTRODUCTION TO CARTING.

HERE'S WHAT YOU DO:

PLEASE NOTE: YOU SHOULD ONLY TRAIN IN A FENCED AREA WITH A LEASHED DOG THAT KNOWS BASIC OBEDIENCE.

1) KNOW HOW TO GET HIS TAIL WAGGING!~ BE SILLY IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES!

2) SELECT A WELL FITTING HARNESS.

3) SHOW THE HARNESS TO YOUR DOG & LET HIM TRY IT ON. PRAISE HIM THE ENTIRE TIME- IF HIS TAIL ISN'T WAGGING, DON'T PROCEED UNTIL IT IS!

4) DON'T LEAVE IT ON. SILENCE YOUR PRAISE ABRUPTLY WHEN YOU TAKE IT OFF & PUT IT AWAY! (THIS GETS HIM THINKING...)

5) REPEAT #3 EVERY DAY UNTIL THAT TAIL STARTS WAGGING AT THE SIGHT OF THE HARNESS.

6) ONCE HE'S TRULY THRILLED TO SEE HIS HARNESS, START LEAVING IT ON FOR A FEW MINUTES MORE EACH DAY (UP TO ABOUT 15 MIN.) WATCH HIM WALK, RUN, SIT & LIE DOWN WITH IT- HE NEEDS TO GET THE FEEL OF IT- TO TRY IT OUT. IF HE EVER SHOWS A HINT OF DISTRUST, REASSURE HIM UNTIL HIS TAIL IS GOING AGAIN & THEN TAKE IT OFF! DO NOT RUSH! WE ARE ONLY TALKING ABOUT A FEW DAYS OF PATIENCE- FOR A LIFETIME OF HAPPY CARTING!

HOW TO START PULLING...

THESE ARE CRUCIAL STAGES IN THE PROCESS. MOST DOGS WILL SHOW SOME CONCERN AT ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING STEPS. THE TRICK IS TO HAVE HIM ON LEAD AND UNDER CONTROL. BE READY TO STOP HIM FROM SCARING HIMSELF...

7) ATTACH THE TRACES ABOUT 1 FOOT APART TO A "LIGHT DRAG"- THIS COULD BE A SMALL LOG, 2 PARTIALLY FILLED PLASTIC MILK JUGS, ETC. EXCITE HIM TO "PULL"! PRACTICE UNTIL HE IS TOTALLY CONFIDENT ON DIFFERENT SURFACES- PAVEMENT, GRASS, GRAVEL, ETC. WHATEVER YOU HAVE AVAILABLE. DO THIS ONLY ON LEAD. YOU CAN ADD WEIGHT TO THE DRAG IN INCREMENTS.

8) INTRODUCE YOUR DOG TO THE SHAFTS. YOU DON'T NEED A CART TO DO THIS. YOU DO NEED A HELPER. FIRST LET YOUR DOG SMELL THE "SHAFT" AND THE HELPER. WALK THE DOG (HARNESS ON, NO DRAG) WITH YOUR LEASH HELD CLOSE TO THE COLLAR. IN ORDER FOR YOUR DOG TO HAVE CONFIDENCE, YOU MUST BE IN COMPLETE CONTROL. HAVE YOUR HELPER WALK ALONG THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOG WITH THE CART OR A MAKESHIFT SHAFT SUCH AS A BROOM DRAGGING ON THE GROUND. DO NOT TOUCH THE DOG WITH THE SHAFT AT FIRST, THEN HAVE YOUR HELPER GENTLY BUMP THE DOG WITH THE SHAFT TO SIMULATE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN CARTING. WALK IN A STRAIGHT LINE ABOUT 50 FEET OR MORE, PRAISING AS YOU GO. IF THE DOG BALKS, GET HIM TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD & PRAISE A LOT TO GET HIS MIND OFF IT- HE NEEDS TO KNOW THAT THE SHAFT JUST DOESN'T MATTER. REPEAT UNTIL THE DOG IS NOT BOTHERED BY THE "SHAFT" AT ALL. THIS CAN BE SCARY- SOME DOGS NEED MORE THAN ONE SESSION.

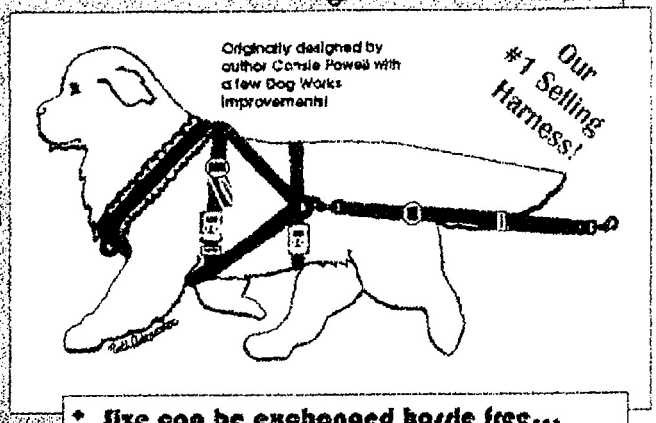
9) NOW YOU NEED A CART! MAKE SURE YOUR DOG HAS DONE STEP 8 WITH HIS NEW CART - SO IT WON'T SCARE HIM. THEN HAVE YOUR DOG STAND & LET YOUR HELPER BRING THE CART FORWARD SO THAT THE DOG IS BETWEEN THE SHAFTS. DO NOT HITCH UP. JUST WALK & LET HELPER HOLD SHAFTS & PULL CART, GENTLY BUMPING THE DOG ON BOTH SIDES. PATIENCE, PATIENCE...

10) THIS TIME, PUT SHAFTS THROUGH HARNESS LOOPS TO LET HIM FEEL THE SHAFT WEIGHT. DO NOT ASK DOG TO PULL. HOLD HIM STEADY & PRAISE HIM. THIS IS WHERE SOME PEOPLE RUSH & REALLY SCARE THE DOG. DON'T DO IT- IF HE SHOWS ANY ALARM, UNHITCH. CHECK THAT TAIL- IT'S GOT TO BE WAGGING BEFORE YOU PROCEED!

11) FINALLY! HITCH DOG TO CART- INCLUDING TRACES, OR SPREADER BAR. HAVE HELPER IN HIS USUAL POSITION IN CASE THE DOG PANICS- (HE MUST BE PREPARED TO GRAB THE SHAFTS WHILE YOU STEADY YOUR DOG- THE WORST POSSIBLE SET BACK IS IF YOUR DOG JUMPS OVER & GETS TANGLED OR GETS AWAY FROM YOU. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP HIM SAFELY UNDER CONTROL- BE PREPARED FOR THE WORST SO THE WORST WON'T HAPPEN) GO FORWARD IN A STRAIGHT LINE ABOUT 50 YARDS PRAISING HIM FOR HIS BRILLIANCE. YOU MUST READ YOUR DOG & KNOW WHEN TO STOP- PREFERABLY ON A POSITIVE NOTE. STOP ANY TIME IF HE REFUSES TO GO FORWARD & YOU RISK SCARING HIM- DON'T DO IT- GO BACK TO STEP 9. IN EITHER CASE, PRAISE GENTLY, UNHITCH, THEN LOTS OF PRAISE...

...YOU DID IT! NOW YOU NEED TO WORK ON MANEUVERING (ANOTHER TOPIC...) (C) COPYRIGHT 1992, DOG WORKS, INC.

Siwash Carting Harness



-Adjustable size & height of shaft loops.
-Floating girth for easy on/off & smooth braking.
-Quick release buckles on girths.
-removable, adjustable traces

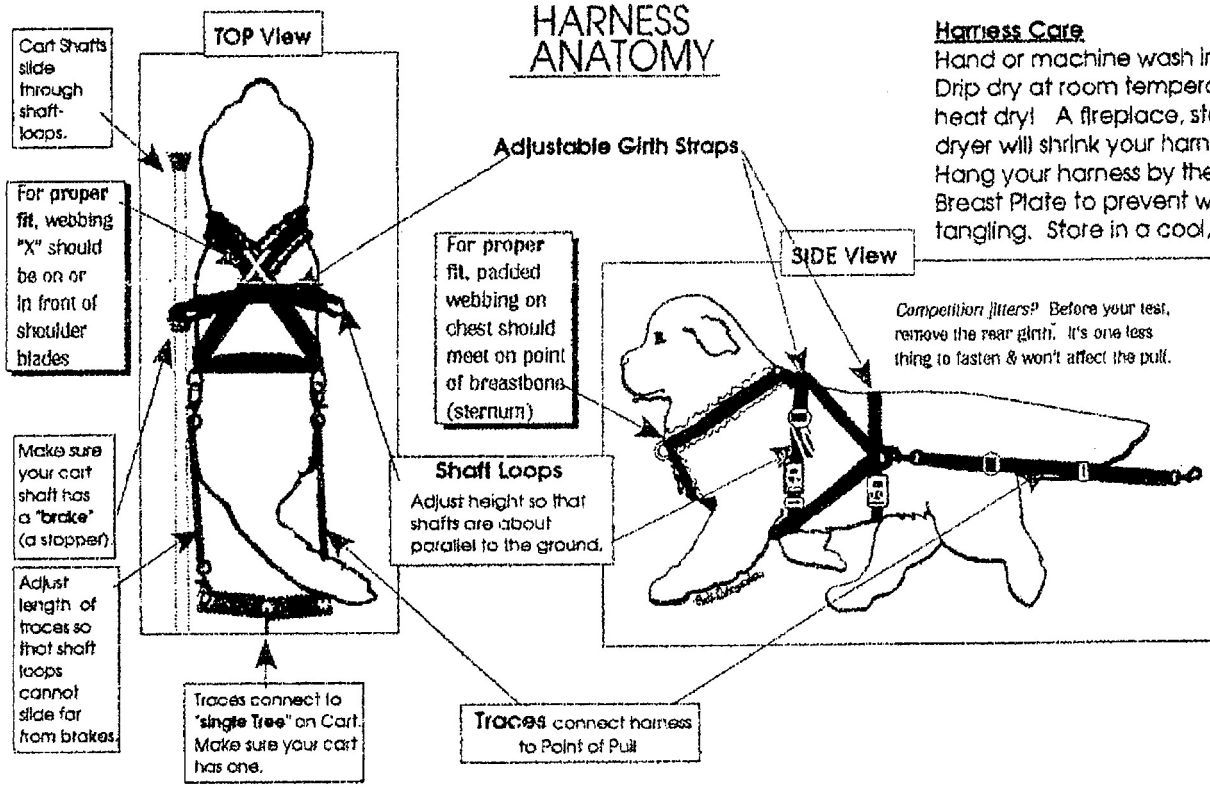
Even sizes from 18 to 36 usually in stock.

*** Size can be exchanged hassle free...**
Call to make arrangements or just drop it in the mail ($3.00 postage) with instructions & a check for $4.50 to cover shipping & handling. No re-stocking charge!

About Your Harness

Congratulations! You have just purchased one of the best carting harnesses available! Dog Works' harnesses are made with 2,000 pound test nylon webbing. We use super plush synthetic pile to pad the neckline & breast plate. This provides comfort & protection for the dog, classy good looks, and it's machine washable! The "Siwash" name refers to the freedom of shoulder movement your dog will enjoy because of the criss cross design at the withers & breast bone. Siwash harnesses are widely considered the safest type for pulling. This "Siwash Carting Harness" is designed just for carting! It offers the convenience of removable traces so you can keep your dog in harness even when he is unhitched! This can be an indispensible feature when waiting at parades and taking rest stops & lunch breaks while out & about with your canine partner.

HARNESS ANATOMY


TOP View
Cart Shafts slide through shaft-loops.
For proper fit, webbing "X" should be on or in front of shoulder blades
Make sure your cart shaft has a "brake" (a stopper)
Adjust length of traces so that shaft loops cannot slide far from brakes
Traces connect to "single tree" on Cart. Make sure your cart has one.
Adjustable Girth Straps
For proper fit, padded webbing on chest should meet on point of breastbone (sternum)
Shaft Loops
Adjust height so that shafts are about parallel to the ground.
SIDE View
Competition jitters? Before your test, remove the rear girth. It's one less thing to fasten & won't affect the pull.
Traces connect harness to Point of Pull

Harness Care

Hand or machine wash in cool water. Drip dry at room temperature. Do not heat dry! A fireplace, stove or clothes dryer will shrink your harness about 10%! Hang your harness by the ring on the Breast Plate to prevent wrinkling & tangling. Store in a cool, dry place.

Recommended reading:
Newfoundland Draft Work, by Consie Powell
The "bible"...great for any breed. $18.00 +shipping

Put the harness on gently so your dog will know this is "Fun Stuff"!

Put the harness on like a sweater... First detach the traces & unbuckle both girth straps. Then, gather the harness in your hands starting with the rear girth so that everything goes over his head at once. Then, when it's all hanging around his neck, straighten it out over his back and lift his front legs through one at a time. Buckle the rear girth & adjust so it's comfortable. Finally, adjust the forward girth strap: adjust the length & height of the shaft loops to fit your apparatus, then adjust the size of the girth so that it's snug, but not tight.

If the Webbing at the top of the neck (the "X") will not lie flat, then it's too tight. If it can be pulled back past the withers (the highest point at the shoulder blades), then it's too loose. If you are uncertain about the fit, please call us for help!

Dog Works, Inc.
1-800-787-2788

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schflkt.drw

Carting in Canada

*Formal drafting has arrived in Canada, allowing all draft enthusiasts to add another draft title to their dog's name. We thank Coral Denis for providing these regulations. It is noted: "These rules are those laid out by the Newfoundland Club of Canada and adopted by the CKC as the rules pertaining to all breeds allowed to compete in Canada for a draft certificate. At present, only Newfoundlands, Bernese, and Mastiffs are allowed to compete." Also: "**for Newfoundland, insert Bernese Mountain Dog; ignore water tests; for NDCC Working Dog Chairman, insert BMDCC Draft Chairman.**"*

GENERAL REGULATIONS APPLIED TO...DRAFT TESTS

1. These certificates are designed to test the traditional functions of the Newfoundland dog [Bernese Mountain Dog], and competition will open to registered Newfoundlands [BMDs] only.
2. Age limits should be set to prevent stressing a puppy beyond his strength...Land tests will require a minimum age of one year.
3. A certificate will be awarded to any Newfoundland [Bernese Mountain Dog] who completes each of the four tests successfully. Proposed designations are as follows:...Draft Dog and Draft Dog Excellent for Junior and Senior Land tests.
4. Judges during the shake-down period shall be approved by the Chairman of the Working Dog Committee on recommendation of a committee member. Some qualifications to be considered might include a background in obedience and/or other types of training.
5. Permission to hold a test must be obtained from the NDCC [BMDCC] Working Dog Chairman at least three months prior to the date of testing.
6. All dogs must be preentered. Entries shall not be received less than 10 days prior to the first day of the test.
7. In order to receive certification at any level, a dog must qualify under at least three different judges. In order to facilitate the granting of certification, a test-giving club may appoint three judges to score at an individual test. The judges will separately score each dog, and each judge must pass a dog on each exercise in order that the dog may receive certification.
8. Scoring will be on a pass/fail basis in the interests of shortening judging time. Scored matches or regional tests may be held. All exercises must receive a Pass score for certification. A partially trained dog can be counted on only part of the time.
9. In the event that two judges mark a dog Pass and a third Fail, the dog may carry the two Pass scores into another trial.
10. Junior certification shall be a prerequisite for entry into Senior Division work.
11. All equipment and apparatus needed for the tests shall be provided by the individual handlers, with the exception of...any equipment needed to define the site and facilitate the operation of the tests, which shall be provided by the test-giving club or committee.
12. Bitches in season may compete; however, they shall be judged after all other animals entered on that day have finished, and prior to competing they shall be confined away from the test site.
13. Any dog exhibiting unwarranted aggressive behavior shall be removed and contained away from the test site unless competing.

GENERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING...DRAFT TESTS

1. The committee giving the test shall be responsible for obtaining permission from the NDCC [BMDCC] Working Dog Committee to hold a test.
2. Finding and securing the use of a suitable site, all marking and defining of such a site, selection of judges (who must be approved by the Working Dog Committee at the time permission is granted to hold the test).
3. Obtaining the services of competent stewards for the test.
4. Providing any equipment not provided by individual handlers:

...

(b) exhibitor numbers;

(c) necessary distance markers for Land...tests;

...

(e) judges' equipment (i.e., score sheets, whistle if used);

...

(g) suitable distraction devices in the case of Land trials;

(h) First aid kit, recommended for all tests; and

(i) a suitable ring marked out for Basic Control and/or Carting completion.

5. The test committee after consultation with the judges shall make any and all immediate decisions arising from unforeseen circumstances and unpredictable weather.
6. Judging begins when dog and handler come to the judge for testing and ends when they are dismissed by the judge.
7. Basic Control at Junior level in...Land...shall be judged at the beginning of testing. Thereafter, each dog shall be judged in turn, completing all exercises before the next dog begins. On land, this would be in each category (i.e., all dogs judged in Carting, then all in Field Work, then all in Backpacking).
8. Dogs will compete in catalogue order, with the exception of bitches in season, which shall be judged last.
9. Testing may be interrupted at any time deemed necessary by the judges.
10. Judges shall score each dog independently, and Pass scores on all exercises shall be necessary from three judges for certification at each level.
11. During the test, the decision of the judges shall be final in all matters affecting the working of dogs and handlers and in evaluation of their performance. The test committee shall decide other matters arising at the test.

GENERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING DRAFT TESTING

1. The Junior test will be divided into three sections: Control; Carting, to be held on a level surface without change of terrain (i.e., paved surface or level short grass); and Field Work, to be performed over rougher terrain with natural obstacles, such as trees or hills, to be incorporated into the test.
2. The Senior test will require, in addition to the above, a backpacking course of not less than 1/2 mile.
3. Because the nature of the exercises may prove stressful to some degree, the minimum age for eligibility shall be one year on the day of the test.
4. Draft apparatus and harness shall be supplied by the handler and shall be suitable for the work required.
5. Junior certification shall be a prerequisite for entry in the Senior Division.
6. Because teamwork is essential to safety in draft work, all exer-

FIRST BMDCC DRAFT DOG TEST

Likely by the time most of you receive this publication, the BMDCC's second draft test also will be history. Here is David Denis's report on the first test.

Our first draft test is now history, and it was very exciting with three qualifiers out of four entries. Entries included Ch. Bigpaw's Banfield CDX, TD, Am. NDD, DD (owner Bonnie Dick); Silbertahl's Legacy TT, DD (owner Donna Virgint); Uschka v d Hausmatt HIC, DD (owner Margrit Whittome); and Ch. Maximum Avalanche v Mt. Tops (owner Madeline Knowles).

Also history making is the fact that Bonnie Dick's Banfield becomes the first Bernese to hold drafting titles in both Canada and the United States! All four performed their exercises crisply and vigorously, leaving one to forget that Bannie is over 8 years old. The only mistake was Max standing to look at another dog while on the long down....

cises will be performed off lead, demonstrating cooperation between handler and dog. Any dog not reliable off lead is not ready to be tested and certified.

7. The judges will examine all equipment supplied by the entrants, prior to the control exercises, in order to approve the safety and suitability of the harnesses and apparatuses.

8. No specific time limits shall be given; however, it is the judges' option to deem that a dog is not working, and should be marked Failed and ordered to stop.

9. In draft work, once a dog is presented for judging the dog will at no time while working sit or lie down. It is assumed that the dog is at work, and any position other than standing while hitching, loading or unloading, or unhitching is an automatic failure.

JUNIOR DIVISION DRAFT TEST

EXERCISE 1, CONTROL

Purpose

Control demonstrates the dog's ability to be a safe and obedient companion and worker. Control will be demonstrated off lead, in a ring about 40 by 50 feet. Three basic maneuvers will be performed:

Heel free
Stand-stay for 1 Minute
Down-stay for 3 Minutes

Praise, vocal commands and hand signals are acceptable in any motion exercise.

Qualifying performance

(a)**Heel Off Lead.** The dog shall be on the handler's left side and shall remain within arm's reach of the handler at all times. The judge shall use at least one of each of the following commands: Forward, Slow, Fast, Normal, Right turn, Left turn, About turn, and Halt; in any order predetermined by the judge and the same for each dog. Dog and handler shall receive a Pass score providing the dog responds to the handler's command and remains within arm's reach of the handler. A stand at heel at the halt is quite acceptable.

(b)**Stand-Stay.** On command from the judge, the handler will stand the dog, positioning the dog comfortably if he chooses. When ready, the handler shall give one command for the dog to stay, by voice, hand signal, or combination. The handler will then walk forward about 6 feet and turn to face the dog. The dog shall not move position from the time the handler leaves until, after a 1-minute period, the judge tells the handler to return to the dog. On the handler's return, the dog will remain in position until the judge give the command "Exercise finished."

(c)**Down-Stay.** The 3-minute down will be performed as a group exercise, with handlers across the width of the ring. No more than 10 nor less than 2 dogs shall be judged at one time. The handler may manually put the dog into the down position prior to removing the leash and placing it behind the dog. The judge will give the command "Leave your dog." The handler will give the dog one command to stay, by voice, hand signal, or a combination, then will leave the dog and walk briskly to the opposite side of the ring, where he will turn to face the dog. The dog must stay in position from the time the handler leaves throughout a 3-minute period, and until the handler has been told by the judge to return to the dog, the handler has returned and the dog is in heel position, and the judge has said exercise is finished.

EXERCISE 2, CARTING

Purpose

To demonstrate the dog's usefulness as a draft animal in maneuvering loads safely and quietly on a wheeled vehicle over a moderate distance and smooth terrain. A cart or wagon will be the most suitable vehicle for this test.

Qualifying Performance

1. Handler harnesses and hitches dog in ring. The cart or wagon and harness may be brought in by an assistant or the ring steward; alternatively, the handler will put dog on a stand-stay and get harness and vehicle himself. During the harnessing and hitching, the handler's skill and the dog's willingness will be judged.

2. The judge will direct the handler to perform maneuvers to test ability of the dog to haul forward, turn left and right, and halt.

3. The judge will direct the handler to maneuver through a figure 8 course, marked as a distance between 2 posts (set by test chairman).

4. The dog must be backed up while hitched for a distance of at least 4 feet.

EXERCISE 3, FIELD WORK

Purpose

To demonstrate the dog's ability to pull a suitable freight load over a moderate distance in cooperation with the handler.

Qualifying Performance

The dog may be presented to the judge for inspection already harnessed and hitched if the harness and draft apparatus are identical to those used in the carting exercise. **OR**

The dog will stand quietly for examination of the harness (dog may be presented already in harness) and stand quietly for hitching to the designated load (set by test chairman).

Dog and handler will then proceed from the starting point to a designated load (could be a Christmas tree, some brush, or firewood to be removed from work area). This load will be about 100 yards from the starting point. Dog will halt on command and stand quietly to be loaded. Dog and handler will move forward, make a 180-degree turn, possibly around a barrel, and proceed at a good working pace back to the starting point. Dog will again stand quietly to unload and unhitch. Exercise finishes when dog is unhitched. Apparatus is not required in this test; a hauling harness may be attached directly to the load if preferred.

(The judge[s] will determine that the load is safe and secure. His/their decision is final.)

This test should take place on natural terrain, with sloping land, boulders, high grass, and/or trees providing natural obstacles.

SENIOR DIVISION DRAFT TEST–DRAFT DOG EXCELLENT

Junior certification shall be a prerequisite for entry, and control may be assumed.

EXERCISE 1, CARTING

Purpose

To demonstrate the dog's competence as a draft animal by pulling a wheeled conveyance on a smooth surface.

Qualifying Performance

Cart or wagon and harness will be in the ring prior to commencement of judging. Dog and handler will enter ring and handler will command dog to stand-stay at a point about 20 feet from vehicle.

Handler will collect the harness and return to the dog, who will cooperate while being harnessed. Dog and handler will walk to the vehicle. Handler will then hitch the vehicle to the dog, then command the dog to back the vehicle at least 4 feet. Handler may not touch the dog or vehicle during backup. Backup must be in a straight line only.

Dog and handler will then respond to a series of instructions from the judge to include right and left turns, halts, fast, slow, and normal pace. After the judge has tested the dog working beside the handler, the same course will be repeated with the handler behind the draft apparatus. The handler may stray 2 feet to either side of the cart; however, the dog must perform the entire exercise with the handler behind.

All parts of this exercise will include a load (e.g., passenger in cart or equivalent weight). Judge may use discretion as to whether a given load is too heavy for an individual dog.

EXERCISE 2, FREIGHT HAUL

Purpose

To demonstrate the dog's usefulness as a reliable freighting companion and worker. This exercise is to be performed over rough ground,

incorporating such obstacles as trees, boulders, high grass or snowbanks, and small hills to be negotiated. Draft apparatus suitable to the terrain and/or season should be used as in the Junior test.

Qualifying Performance

Dog will stand quietly to be harnessed and hitched to draft apparatus. Dog will remain standing while handler loads the apparatus with a suitable load (may be some firewood, brush, tools, or some other item which would prove awkward to move without the help of the dog). The emphasis in this exercise is on steadiness to harness, not weight of the load. Dog and handler will negotiate a course to be a minimum of 250 yards and a maximum of 400 yards.

This course will include at least two 90-degree turns and at least one obstacle which will require the dog to stop and await instruction and/or help from the handler; for example, a gate to be opened or a curb to be negotiated. The course will also include one narrow area through which the dog, without apparatus, could move easily. Dog and handler are to work at a comfortable working speed, and the dog is to remain willing, under control, and responsive to the handler at all times. (Dog must be in control at all times during this exercise.) The course may be laid out roughly as a square to facilitate judging, and may end at the starting point.

At the end of the course, the dog will again stand quietly while his master replaces the load and unhitches. Handler may work ahead, beside, or behind the dog as desired. (In this exercise, the judge may use discretion, and to save time a dog may be permitted to begin the exercise harnessed, but hitching will be done as part of the test. The exercise is finished when the dog is unhitched.)

EXERCISE 3, BACKPACKING

Purpose

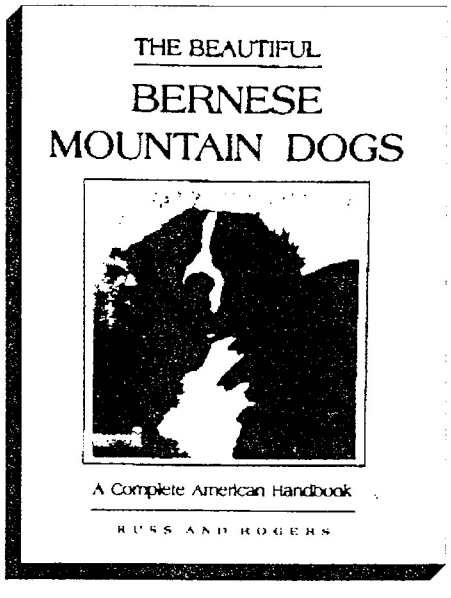
To demonstrate the ability of the dog to function as a pack animal, carrying a load over a long distance and rough terrain.

1. A clear description or a walk through the course shall be given before the judging begins. The course itself shall be clearly marked.
2. Handlers shall provide an appropriate pack for each animal. Tie cords are optional.
3. The dog must carry a two-day supply of dog food (no tins).
4. Backpacks should include lightweight items which might be required for a 2- to 3-day trip. The dog is not required to carry all such equipment.
5. Packs are to be adequately sized to allow the ability to carry approximately 1/6 of the dog's weight to a maximum of 25 pounds.
6. Judge will inspect pack and load.

The course will be a minimum of 1/2 mile over rough terrain. Ideal areas for a course would be a wooded area with a natural trail, including fording running water (stream) through narrow trails with natural obstruction, such as underbrush and fallen logs. A handler whose physical condition prevents taking part in this portion of the test may designate another person to handle the dog through this exercise. Judges must be physically fit in order to negotiate the course with each dog.

Qualifying performance

Dog and handler will be judged as a team throughout this test. Dog will stand quietly to be packed; handler will pack dog with attention to the dog's comfort on the trail. Dog and handler will negotiate a course of at least 1 2 mile over rough terrain and through a variety of obstacles (e.g., fallen trees, fordable streams, steep hills). Dog will remain willing and under control at all times. It is the handler's option whether the dog works ahead, beside, or behind the handler. At some point along the course, dog and handler will meet a distraction in the form of another dog, on leash, with handler. Dog is to remain obedient and responsive during this encounter.



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Editor - Linda Seaver

This is the first of a series of articles about drafting work

Dog Carting

"Three years ago, when I began training my dogs to cart, motorists would laugh and make derogatory remarks as they sped by. Now, they roll down their windows applaud, and triumphantly shout, Right On!"

by Roslyn Foreman

Dog power, a way to beat the gas shortage? That, in effect, is what the signs displayed on my dog cart say. While my Newfoundland drawn cart may never replace the automobile, I find myself using my cart to run more and more errands. Three years ago, when I began training my dogs to cart, motorists would laugh and make derogatory remarks as they sped by. Now, they roll down their windows, applaud, and triumphantly shout, "Right on!" As the gasoline supply dwindles, I find myself approached by more and more people who want to know how, they too, can harness dog power. I refer beginners to my first article, "Dog Carting for Fun and Competition" (OFF—LEAD, Dec., 1977). The addresses of where to buy carts and harnesses have not changed, and I cannot relate the basics of carting any better today than I explained it then. In light of the world situation today, a need has arisen for a more realistic approach to dog carting.

This year the Newfoundland Club of America introduced a new set of rules and exercises for carting competition geared to test the skills of a draft dog and handler under more realistic working conditions. In August, 1979, the N.C.A. the following new guidelines, to be demonstrated at their coming national specialty:

NEWFOUNDLAND CLUB OF AMERICA
REGULATIONS FOR CARTING

For Qualifying in Carting the dog and handler will perform each of the following:

1. Harness and Hitching With Cart or Wagon in the Ring. Dog and handler enter the ring, handler places dog on stay. Handler leaves dog and goes to ring entrance to get harness and returns to dog. Dog stands on command for harnessing. Handler harnesses dog. Dog heels with handler to draft apparatus and stands to be hitched. When hitched, dog and handler move into position indicating dog is ready to work.

2. Basic Commands. Dog will perform exercises A through C while hitched and while pulling an appropriate load. Each exercise will be performed on command and/or signal once with the handler next to or in front of the dog.

a. haul forward
b. slow down
c. stop

Dog will also perform each of the following:

d. back up a distance of 4 feet
e. stay (1 minute), handler out of sight. Dog may stand, sit or lie

3. Maneuvering Exercise: Performed with empty draft apparatus. Course will include the following:

a. circular pattern (left or right)
b. 90° turns
c. a broad curve
d. movement through a narrow area not more than 12 inches wider than the widest dimension of the cart or wagon
e. removable obstacle, dog waits while handler removes obstacle such as a gate or tree branch. Dog and apparatus proceed through the obstacle

All exercises will be performed off leash. Handlers may repeat commands and/or signals. Except for harnessing and hitching the handler may not touch the dog. Praise is permitted between exercises.

Awards. Rosettes for Qualifying Dogs.

Judging will be on a pass/fail bases.
A dog must pass each exercise to qualify.

Continued on Next Page...

Unfortunately, these new guidelines frightened most of the competition, leaving people shaking their heads saying, I can't teach my dog to do that!" Someone even went as far as placing obscene and harassing phone calls to members of the carting committee concerning the change in the carting rules.

TRAINING

Actually, I found that these new maneuvers required very little additional training, and nothing any basic course in obedience would not teach. Yet these few additional commands did mark the difference between carting for fun and practical carting. If you read my initial article and followed my step by step training process to the letter; your dog now hauls forward, backs, accepts both cart and harness, gees, haws, and pulls weight, loving every minute of it. So you ask me, "How can he earn his keep?"

I can answer that with one little word, "Stay"!. That little command you taught your dog, way back in basic beginner's obedience, is probably the most important command in any draft dog's repertoire. Yet it was inadverdently omitted from the N.C.A.'s first list of carting regulations. In order to successfully complete a job, your dog must learn the meaning of the word "stay". This should be taught on lead, without cart and harness. Pose your dog in either a standing, sitting, or down position on your left side, drop your hand in front of his eyes, and sternly say, "Stay". Step directly in front, and face the dog. Any deviation from the original position in which you left him, must result in an immediate correction back into that posture. Be consistent!. If you told the dog to sit and he goes down, jerk him back up to a sit, even if he breaks 100 times. As he learns to stay, gradually back up. Do this until your dog is steady, even when you drop the leash, and finally with no leash at all. Those who learned "stay" in an obedience class are that much more advanced, but a good draft dog must take the staying exercise several steps further than is required to earn A.K.C. titles.

When your dog is a steady stayer at home, it is time to advance. Begin posing him in as many strange places and situations as possible. Leave him, and do the silliest thing you can in front of him. Your chore, such as chopping fire wood, can look strange and inviting to a dog who has been told to stay. Yet, a cart dog who breaks and gets in the way of your saw, not only hinders your work, but endangers your life and his. Teach your dog to stay when you are out of sight. Begin by leaving the room and reappearing every 15 seconds to reassure him that you are not abandoning him. Increase the time out of sight as he learns to trust you when you promise to return. A good working dog who breaks his stay when you enter a store to make the purchase, is in danger of being hit by a car, or doing property damage with the cart, especially if he panics.

Lastly, build up the length of time he must stay in each position. The greatest length of required "staying power" needed to earn A.K.C. titles in the Open 3 minute sit and 5 minute down. This is not long enough for a good draft dog. The longer you can trust your dog to maintain a steady stay, the more time you can spend doing your shopping or chore. The dog's comfort is the reason for teaching the dog to stay in three different positions. While standing is the least comfortable position for the dog, it is the easiest position for you to harness and hitch him. For short delays, some dogs find standing more comfortable than sitting. A dog on "sit stay" can stay longer, and is less likely to fidget forward or backward. Finally, in a down position, a well trained dog can wait well over an hour. If you know that you will be a while, unhitch the dog and leave him on "Down, Stay" next to the cart, preferably in a shady spot with a bowl of water. The dog can nap or comfortably watch the world go by while he waits. A dog that will hold a stay is a true asset as a draft animal or a companion without the cart.

THE REGULATIONS

Now that your dog will stay, let's look at the new regulations for carting again:

Number 1 — Harnessing is a "stand, stay".

Number 2 — In my first article, I described how to teach your dog to cart beside you. To slow down, speed up, or stop, you change your pace and the dog will adapt his to maintain his place at your side. The circles, curves and turns are extended gees and haws.

Number 3 — For this exercise, use another basic obedience command, "Come!" Let's say that you have sawed your firewood, and your dog has obediently stayed at a safe distance watching. Wouldn't it be nice, now, if your dog would bring the cart to the wood instead of you carrying the logs to the cart? A simple "Come" command should accomplish this. Once again, this should be taught on lead, without the cart or harness. Leave your dog on stay, walk to the end of the leash, call, "Dog, Come!" and reel him in to you. Gradually increase the distance using longer leads, until your dog comes consistently, then switch to off lead.

Number 4 — Maneuvering through a narrow gate is the problem. Every working cart dog will run into a similar problem sooner or later. The problem could present itself as a tree limb or some other obstacle blocking the road, or the garden gate of your house could be closed. This maneuver is little more than a combination of stay and come. In competition and practice, the Utility bar jump is ideal. Place the two posts 12 inches wider than the widest dimension of your cart. Position your dog and cart behind the bar making sure that they line up straight with the opening. Tell your dog to stay while you remove the bar or obstacle. You pass through, turn, and call your dog. He should pass straight through to you. Tell him to stay again while you return the bar or close the gate.

EQUIPMENT

Prior to putting your dog to work, examine the nature of the job you wish to perform. What type of draft apparatus will suit your purpose best? Indian style travois are easy to build, but friction makes them hard to drag, and they put a great deal of pressure on your dog's back. Sleds and Sledges are fine for snowy regions, but must be converted or sit idle during warm weather. Sulky type carts, with a seat for riders, must be perfectly balanced, and should not be overloaded. Sulkys can be fun, but dogs were not bred to give people rides. A fidgety rider could cause serious injury to your dog. This practice of riders and overloaded carts is what led to a ban of cart dogs in Europe.

The most versatile type of cart, is the box shaped utility cart. It not only hauls everything from bricks to groceries, but can carry riders or be turned into a parade float. There are two types of utility carts, the two—wheeler, and the four wheeler. The two wheeled variety is lighter,

easier to transport, and easier to maneuver. Its drawbacks are the fact that it *must* be perfectly balanced, the load must be evenly distributed, and the wheels must be the proper height to keep the cart level when hitched to each individual dog. A four wheeled cart is sturdier, the wheels can be any size as long as the shafts are placed to accommodate the dog's height, and the load does not need to be as evenly distributed. Unfortunately, four wheeled carts are bulky to transport, and more difficult to turn and maneuver.

Whether you decide to buy or make a two or a four wheeled cart, snow conversion is quite simple. There is no need to buy special runners and unscrew the wheels. Visit your local toy store and buy K—Tel Sno Boats*. Two wheelers will need one package, four wheelers will need two. Tie the cart wheels so they cannot rotate, strap a Sno Boat* on the bottom of each wheel, and you are ready to out—maneuver the stalled motorists in the worst snow.

On these winter excursions, I found that when my Newfoundlands were most comfortable, I was freezing. If you plan to stay out sledding for any length of time, I recommend investing in very warm clothing. Thermal underwear, a down filled vest or coat, down filled gloves, and rubber, fleece lined boots are almost necessities. In the world of insulated garments, anything filled with 100% goose down will provide the most warmth. As for your dog, he will probably love the cold. Remember, dogs prefer cooler weather plus, by working, he is generating heat.

TEAMING

Finally, if one dog can haul a given amount by his weight, can two dogs haul twice as much, three dogs, thrice, etc? If your first dog is carting well, your second dog usually will learn the maneuvers quickly. Try to use two females, a female and male, or two males raised together since puppyhood. I found my two huge male Newfoundlands, Zealot (Mt. Pleasant's Refraf Zealot, U.D., W.D.) and Nathan (Mt. Pleasant's Just Plain Nathan C.D.X.), to be all that I could handle. Zealot would rather pull his cart than do anything else. I began taking Nathan along on lead when Zealot carted. By walking along side and watching Zealot cart, Nathan was ready to be hitched in one fourth the time it took to train Zealot. The problem was that my two males would tolerate each other. They would haul together, but the moment they felt tired or thought that I was lavishing too much praise on the other, they fought. After talking with veteran "mushers", I learned that dogs usually love draft work. In their excitement, they become jealous of teammates and fights are not uncommon. If your dogs are very compatible, fine. But if you detect any jealousy, it may be smarter to use one at a time unless you enjoy breaking up fights and repairing a damaged cart.

There are two ways to hitch two dogs, brace (side by side) and tandem (one in front of the other). The brace method requires a shaft mounted in the middle of the cart, extending out between the two dogs. A bar must be mounted across the bottom front of the cart to widen the cart enough to accommodate two sets of traces.

On a two wheeled cart, it is necessary to add a shaft to each end of the bar (3 shafts) to distribute the weight evenly over both dogs. On a four wheeled cart, only one shaft down the center is necessary as long as the shaft is even with the point where it is hitched to the dog's harness. The tandem method requires the addition of an eyebolt to the tip of each shaft. Attach the lead dog's traces to these eyebolts.

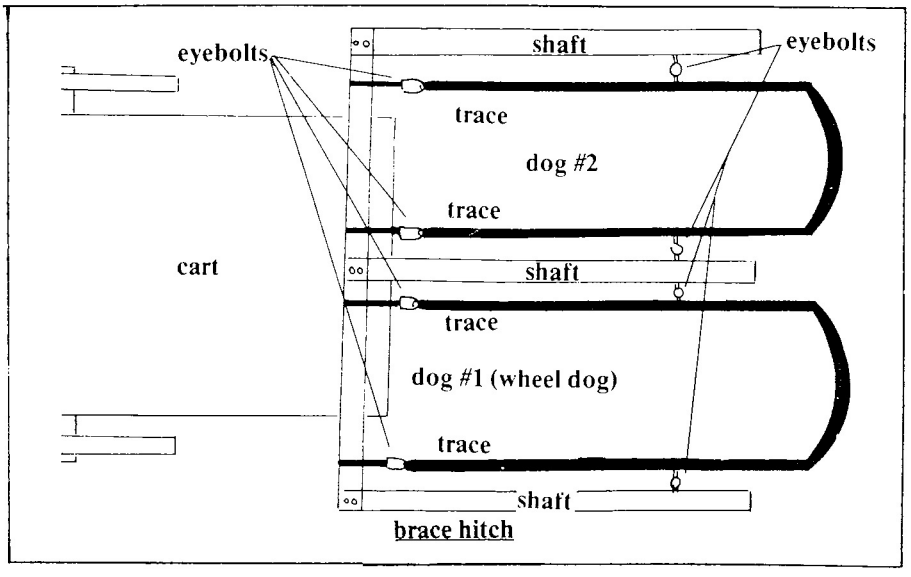
In tandem, the dog who works best, should take the lead position. In a brace, the best worker, or wheel dog, should be positioned closest to you.

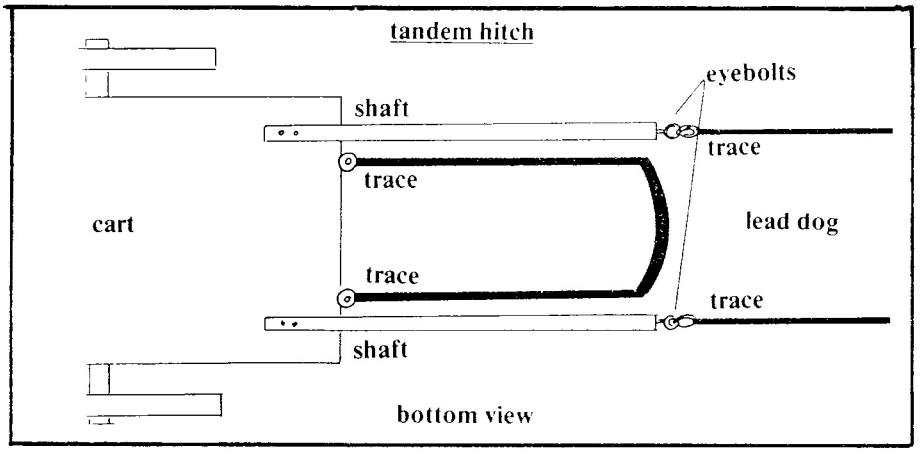
For the person with more than two dogs, who is an excellent trainer, and enjoys something flashy; a team hitch is just right. In August I attended the Giant Schnauzer Specialty in Ravenna, Ohio. The Giant Schnauzer Club put on a beautiful carting exhibit consisting of individual competition, followed by a carting drill team. The grand finale was Harry Russ, who designed and built my cart and most of the carts there, displaying his latest creation; a four wheeled cart drawn by a five dog team. To convert a normal cart into a multiple team hitch, run one shaft up the middle. To the end, add a cross bar, which swivels to facilitate turning, from the center of this bar, run another shaft (T shape). To the end of the T, add another swiveling bar.

Team hauling not only requires a team of highly trained, compatible dogs; but the wheel dog and lead dog must be chosen with special care. While a trained team of dogs, in condition, can pull several thousand pounds; I hope the "gas crunch" does not push us to that point.

SUMMARY

If this gas crisis goes from bad to worse, sending civilization spiraling back to the horse and buggy days, think how superior you will feel knowing how to harness and hitch an animal. Meanwhile, take a look at your present lifestyle. If you live within a mile or two of a shopping center, begin building your dog's and your own endurance to the point where your dog can haul your weekly purchases home. The exercise will keep both of you in good health and physical condition. Carting will keep your conformation dog in top ring condition. You need not worry about a properly padded harness rubbing off hair. If you live in a more rural setting,





or even if you don't, think of the many chores a dog and cart can perform. Around our yard, my Newfs have hauled sand, bricks, cement, raked grass and leaves, firewood, water, and tools. If your child has a paper route, let your dog make the rounds instead of your car. Generally, my dogs have toted furniture to Goodwill, items to an auction, and our training club's paraphernalia as we marched in a parade. With a little imagination, you can dream up many innovative ways for your dog to replace your car.

You will no longer feel so helpless in the face of skyrocketing oil prices and Middle Eastern terrorism. Your dog will love being with you and helping you make your own patriotic statement. The small amount of gas you save will mount up into dollars and cents. After all, dog food is cheaper than gasoline.

*Registered Trademark.

April 1980 OFF—LEAD

Cross-Training for Carting and Total Fitness

Sara Steele

Late last June I made a commitment to enter Laura (De-Li's Look Who's Talking) in Nashoba Valley's Draft Test to be held on October 1. At this time, Laura (22 inches) weighed in at about 68 pounds, and since she would be in *Open* Draft, she would have to pull 60 pounds for a half-mile over all-terrain, gruesome hills. I would have just over three months to turn this flabby little bitch into—Godzilla! I had my work cut out, and I had my doubts.

Alison Jaskiewicz, an experienced carter, in an attempt to reassure me, said, "The dogs will surprise you with what they can do!" Bev Barney, BMDCA Draft Chair, advised me to not panic and "just work her every other day."

Not panic?! Just work her every other day?! I have only 90 days to go and must have the restraint to work her for only 45 of those minimal 90 days?! What a cliffhanger!

But then, as I mulled it over, what Bev said made sense. In weight training, you work out every other day. On the day you work out, you damage muscle tissue, and then you need a day or even two days to rebuild that tissue, which comes back harder, bigger, and stronger than before.

That is what I did with Laura. On the Freight Haul, I worked her every other day, and sometimes I worked her only every three days, just short of twice a week.

The Freight Haul workout consisted of pulling the weights 1 to 2 miles (approximately 15 minutes per half-mile works if your pedometer doesn't) over a variety of terrain, including hills of all grades, both up and down. I increased the load weekly by large increments of 10 pounds, as advised by both Bev Barney and Chris Mann, a Colorado carter who is into beefy, no-nonsense training. Well before the deadline, Laura was able to pull 80 pounds (20 pounds over her maximum load) for no less than 2 miles over all-terrain hills.

Alison's words, "They'll surprise you," and Bev's "every other day" kept echoing through my brain, as well as the slogan words of that little pink battery rabbit, "Keep going...keep going..."

I decided that for Laura and me it would be wise to keep working out on the non-Freight Haul days rather than lie around catching up on the soaps and paunch, so I embarked on a program of *cross-training*.

Cross-training is a threefold workout: (1) freight hauling (for muscle growth and flexibility); (2) aerobic training (for cardio-respiratory endurance); (3) anaerobic training (for coordination, speed, and balance.) All of these workout styles burn calories and improve muscle tone and mass. Aerobics should involve continuous activity for extended periods, whereas anaerobics should involve high activity in short bursts, with rests in between.

Aerobic options for a *canine x-training* program will depend on where one lives. Rural people may opt simply to take their dogs hiking in the woods, where obstacles and hills present themselves naturally. The dogs must be willing to run, rather than just meander about, poking and sniffing the logs and detritus. Off-lead hiking is best, but I need not remind you that other creatures share the woodland, so it is imperative that you be able to control your dogs. Swimming is another terrifically great activity, provided your dogs will truly swim rather than just wade. City folks may choose to take their dogs on long, brisk walks or, like my friends Louise Wetzel and Sophie (Brighteye Sizzlin Dragonfire), who live in Queens, use treadmills.

The anaerobic options are the *fun* things, like Agility and Flyball.

Because we live near the woods and take camping vacations with our dogs, I chose hiking as Laura's aerobics. Laura herself chose *agility* for her anaerobics.

The end results were awesome. Laura's muscles were as hard as rocks, enlarged and well defined, like the pictures in an anatomy book. Everyone thought that she had lost 10 pounds, but no, she had actually gained a pound. Muscle is heavier than fat. In Agility, she no longer ticked the jumps; now, she cleared them with aplomb. On the Freight Haul, she was now nearly running the hills with her freight load for sustained distances. Laura had really become a "little Godzilla!" And if that were not enough, she now felt, on palpation, more like a sound conformation dog.

Try *x-training*, everyone. It really works!

Ed. note: Laura was the only passing Berner in an Open Draft entry of five in the BMDC of Nashoba Valley Draft Test, October 1, 1995.

Training That Darn Berner

Ingrid Hubbard

I wanted a new breed. After breeding and showing Golden Retrievers for 25 great years, I became dissatisfied with the direction the breeders are taking the Goldens. They are great dogs, but I just wanted a change.

About 20 years ago, I saw a Berner at a show in Youngstown, Ohio, and told my husband that someday I would have one of "those dogs." It has never ceased to surprise me that my desire for a Berner was not a surprise to my husband, Tom. He remembered that comment and just wondered when it would happen.

Well, that day arrived when we drove to New York to get Wendy. I must admit that I did quite a bit of research to find a good breeder, Bev Burney; but I honestly didn't do my homework when it came to Bernese temperament and trainability.

I had never met a Berner until the day I picked up Wendy, even though I have taught obedience classes for 25 years. I don't recommend that anyone choose a dog in this manner, but I did, and I'm not one bit sorry. Apparently, what I didn't know didn't hurt me.

I can speak with certainty when I say that a Berner is a unique dog to train. I haven't met all Berners, but I can now count about six Berners as my friends. Each is an individual, but they share many traits. One trait is stubbornness. Wow, when a Berner doesn't want to do something, a Berner doesn't do it. I have never had to coax a dog so much as I do Wendy. Nor have I spent so little time in training a dog.

I found that the key to training Wendy is to show her once how it is done and then leave her alone. Don't drill and don't force. I let Wendy watch a number of dogs go over the dogwalk in agility class after she refused the first time. After she had sat and watched other dogs, she was more than happy to try it herself.

I didn't start with agility and drafting; I started with the basics—obedience.

I start basic training as soon as a dog comes into our home—not the formal training, but the training the dog will need for the rest of its life. It's the foundation that all creatures (humans, too) need to get along in this world. It's the rules of society: don't wet on the floor, don't cry when you're put in a crate, don't backtalk, etcetera. The stronger the foundation, the easier the training.

Wendy was hell to housebreak, and I thought I would never be able to trust her outside a crate. But finally, when she was about 6

Combining Community Service and Drafting events

Steve Dudley

Every year at the winter meetings of the Grand Canyon State Bernese Mountain Dog Club (GCSBMDC), we try to develop ideas for events we think our members would like. As part of our effort for the spring 1997 season, we decided to undertake a community service project. With guidance and advice from Gisela Liden, we decided to organize a food drive for the Desert Mission Food Bank of north Phoenix. It was not to be an ordinary food drive; we wanted it to be a special event that offered not only something for the community but also something positive for our members and club.

The Desert Mission is a consortium of entities serving the north Phoenix area. From its beginning in 1927, with the food bank, the Desert Mission eventually organized for the purpose of identifying, responding to, and contributing to the social and economic well-being of the north Phoenix area. It provides charitable, education, and health-related services for the young, the elderly, and the underpriviledged of all ages. It also provides residential facilities for the elderly. To accomplish this task, the Mission operates as a non-profit service and as an affiliate of the Lincoln Health organization, integrating with other services. The Desert Mission occupies several city blocks in north Phoenix, including the Desert Mission Food Bank and warehouse, the Helen C Lincoln Learning Center, the Hancox Desert Lodge, a children's dental clinic and day care center, and the John C Lincoln Hospital, all spread over a sprawling campus environment. The food bank is funded and supplied through donations from interested people and community groups.

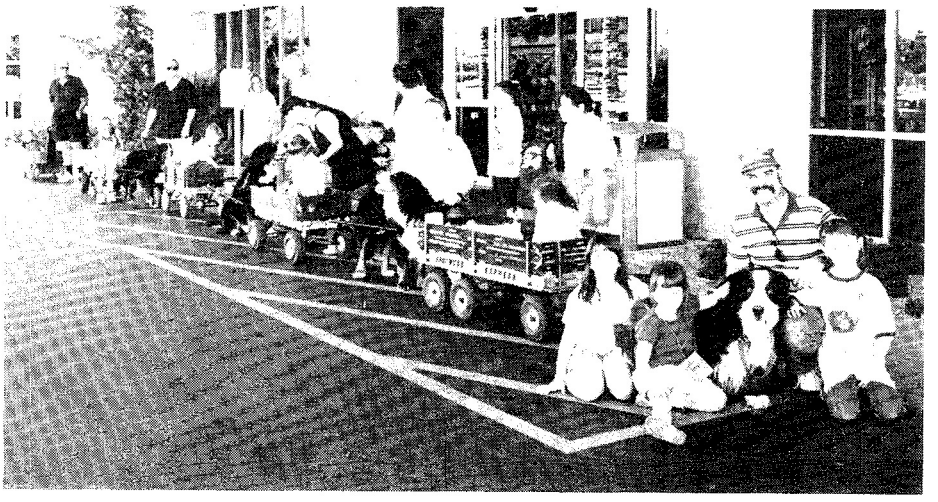
With a growing interest in drafting and the 1997 BMDCA National Speciality in Colorado just around the corner, many members wanted opportunities to practice drafting and obedience with their Berners. We decided to offer a draft match and CGC test for our February meeting. It was decided that in lieu of entry fees for these events, contributions in the form of food and monies would be accepted to support a planned food drive for the Desert Mission Food bank in March. Members worked hard to coordinate the draft match and CGC test. Shannon Skurja coordinated a bake sale in conjunction with the draft match and CGC test, which also accepted contributions for goodies.

On a bright and beautiful February 16, we held our draft match and CGC test at Granada Park in Phoenix. Participation in the draft match and CGC test was strong, and many members attending the meeting contributed through the bake sale. Members unable to attend the meeting that day contributed monetarily. By the end of the day, we'd collected over 80 items of food and $92.75 in support of the food drive. Gisela contacted the Desert Mission Food Bank to assess its needs and then used the donated monies to purchase the items requested.

On completion of our draft match and CGC test, we were ready to begin our community service. In addition to practicing practical drafting exercises with our Berners, we also hoped in some small way to keep alive the working heritage of the breed, and to share their wonderful abilities and temperaments in an educational manner that promoted purebred dogs and responsible pet ownership. Our club developed a flyer that detailed our purpose and goals, and described the history, standard, and heritage of the Bernese Mountain Dog. This flyer was sent to the Desert Mission for distribution prior to our arrival on March 15.

March 15 dawned yet another beautiful day. Four teams of draft dogs met at the Desert Mission food bank that morning: Gisela Liden with Deerpark Heiko vom Sommenhof; Mark and Sue German with Swiss Stars The Right Stuff; Donna Boyd with Deerpark Gabrielle's Promise; and Steve and Meri Dudley with Ch. Deerpark Didis Oso Baron CD NDD. Loaded with 142 food items and 51 packaged dinners collected from our draft match, CGC test, bake sale, and donated monies, the teams hauled the goods to the warehouse scales. After delivering the donation, the draft teams were invited to proceed around the sprawling campus to visit the various facilities and collect further donations. The teams were escorted to the day care center a few blocks away to meet about 20 children and invite them to accompany us on our rounds. Desert Mission provided a security guard to assist in stopping traffic when the teams crossed roads.

After allowing the children to greet and hug all the dogs, the



entourage began its collection rounds. From the Hancox Lodge retirement home, to the Bryan Center extended care facility, to the John C Lincoln Hospital, the draft teams proceeded through a variety of practical draft applications. From grassy parks, to city streets, down narrow pathways, up enclosed ramps, around foyer decorations to the doorsteps of each facility accompanied by the children, the Berners worked their carts and wagons in about every situation imaginable. At each location, the children accepted the donated goods and loaded them into the waiting wagons. The Berners were enjoying themselves, as evidenced by the high-held wagging tails as they proceeded from location to location.

The morning was filled with the excited laughter of children having an enjoyable time, and opportunities for the residents and patients at the various facilities to enjoy contact with the Berners. On more than one occasion, elderly people would approach the dogs in quietness and stoop to hug the big dogs in a distant, knowing way, then turn with moist eyes, thank the handler, and allow the dogs on their way. The Berners were all great ambassadors for the breed that day.

By the time the rounds were made, the teams had covered well over a mile and collected another 140 pounds of food. With full wagons and accompanied by the still gleeful children, the teams made their way to the food bank warehouse for another delivery. That day the teams delivered over 300 pounds of food items to the food bank warehouse. After the final delivery, the teams and children paused for a staff photographer (see picture), then the kids piled into the wagons, and it was time for a return trip to the day care center. Again winding through courtyards and down narrow pathways, the teams negotiated a variety of obstacles with their cargos and returned the thrilled children to the doorstep of the day care center. A final hug from all the children for the dogs ended the hard work, and the teams hauled their empty wagons back to the assembly point.

Everyone involved had a great time. The dogs and handlers were presented with ample situations to hone the dogs' draft abilities. Each dog that day turned in a flawless performance that would have passed any draft test devised. The staff from the food bank thanked us for our efforts and invited us to return again any time. Given the fun that everyone involved had, I think that will be assured. Thanks to all the members of the GCSBMDC who contributed their time and efforts in support of these events to make this a wonderful community service project. The success of it is attributable to all your efforts.

An International Incident

Jim LaFrom

With just a germ of an idea that sparked in their imagination, Lisa and Sean Ebnet approached Sierra West BMDC about hosting an international draft test. The weekend of April 5-6,1997, would be devoted to draft work in cooperation with the BMDC of Canada. The concept of holding two draft tests on a weekend might not be unique, but the idea of getting a BMDCA as well as a CKC draft title was certainly enticing. Lisa sent the club a very professional proposal that further peaked interest. After several telephone conversations and a discussion at the club's board meeting, we decided to sponsor the event. I was the Draft Test Chair in California, and Lisa and Sean Ebnet acted as the coordinators in the Northwest, doing the bulk of the pre-event planning for the BMDCA test. David and Coral Denis headed the Canadian contingent.

In the ensuing months, many good thoughts, more mail, and even more e-mail passed up and down the Pacific Coast. (Thank God for the internet). Much of the preplanning was based on blind faith. Messages and questions came in. Answers would be typed and sent off into cyberspace with a press of the "send now" button. Each evening as I logged in, I knew I had one more item to add to my to-do list as I heard that almost too friendly voice announce, "You've got mail." As the time of the weekend drew closer, message volume increased, more checklists were completed, and more reminders were sent off. With only these typed replies and assurances of work performed, I placed the fate of the weekend in the hands of the Ebnets and their many enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers. Many, if not most, of the volunteers had not even seen a draft test, but had no problem putting in a lot of hours, securing the needed permissions, and gathering the ring equipment and decorations. Others scoured the surrounding community businesses for donations to our silent auction. In an indication of the depth of support that this event received, many Canadian businesses were among the major contributors to the silent auction, and the Canadian members were ever-present volunteers and ring stewards, which helped add to the smooth running of this event.

The idea of all this planning became real when I purchased my flight tickets. As I boarded the plane at 7 a.m., I offered up a prayer that this event wasn't a delayed April fool's joke. I arrived in Seattle uneventfully, and then waited patiently for Steve Dudley, one of the BMDCA Draft Test judges, to arrive from Flagstaff. Once I saw Steve, I knew we were in for a great weekend. Shortly afterward, Christine Mann, the other BMDCA judge, came by with a car to whisk us off to the border.

The site was the Peace Arch Park on the United States/Canada border. This delightful site features views of the Pacific, the snow-capped mountains of the Olympic Peninsula, and the San Juan Islands to the west and the spectacular slopes of Mt. Baker and the Cascades to the east. All around us were manicured lawns that looked more like fairways of a private golf course. The lush vegetation included cedar and spruce trees, budding rhododendrons, and flowering blue sedge that was sewn into broad drifts across some portions of the lawn like translucent pools of water. To add to this blissful scene was the weather, which in uncharacteristic northwest style was bright sunshine and cool, with an onshore wind that kept the dogs very comfortable throughout both days of the weekend.

The weekend started with the Canadian draft test. The rules for draft work were derived from the Newfy rules, and many aspects of the Canadian test still preserve many aspects of the Newfoundland heritage. The first noticeable difference was the number of judges.

David Denis and Tish

Three are required, but in an interesting twist the judges don't necessarily have to be Berner judges. Thus, two of the judges were Newfy people, and the other came from the world of Golden Retrievers. The second immediate difference was that all exercises were performed off lead, which is not the case in the BMDCA test until the Open level. Although most teams that competed were willing, several of the dogs had differing ideas about the execution of a "stay" or a "recall." Third, the CKC test requires two rings—one for the basic obedience and control skills and the other for the maneuvering course. The Canadian version of the test for maneuvering is more generalized and leaves out a lot of the precision work in the BMDCA test. The final part of the CKC test involves a freight haul that can vary in length and degree of difficulty. The judges of the day set this course.

With 17 entries, we had a pretty full day. The large audience laughed, clapped, and sometimes groaned as the teams went through their paces. In the end, five teams made it successfully through the course. They were Belle and Lea Doane, Lou-Lou and Veronica Lindstedt, Bubba and Kayeanne Fitzgerald, Toby and Hilde Engen, and Blair and Lisa Ebnet.

The day was capped off with a judges dinner at the local Mexican restaurant, a small 50-seat diner. We originally had reservations for 21 people. At 5 p.m., 43 people, most of whom were covered with some amount of Berner fur, descended like locusts on this poor little place. People were trying to stuff six people into a four-person booth. People were eating standing up. People were walking sideways to get back to their seat, if they had one. Overburdened servers were rushing around, and Lea and Lisa shared the most enormous margarita I've ever seen, a fishbowl. Lots of talking, lots of laughing; needless to say that everyone had a great evening.

On Sunday morning, we started all over again. People arrived early and helped in the setup. The coffee and bagels were ready. Christine Mann (known for her tough course setups) was already plotting with sinister intent. She and Steve Dudley marked the freight haul course while Sean Ebnet set in place the obstacles he had built, inspired by the obstacles for the national specialty test. Canton flags waved in the wind, flowers accented the gates, and the day got under way. Sunday's entry was 14 teams. Most of the nervous apprehension from Saturday had evaporated, and the test was on. The teams went through their paces with a new-found level of skill that certainly wasn't forthcoming on Saturday. Teams moved quite confidently through the natural obstacles. Crisp turns and squeezing through the narrows were the order of the day. I was positive that Christine's psychic body English was what made the difference in some of those close encounters with the narrows. The highlight of the day (other than the great hot lunch) was the freight haul.

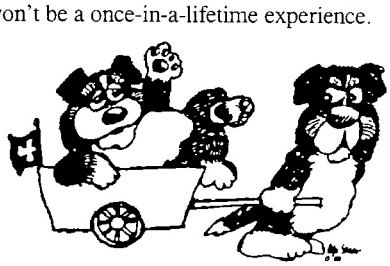
The half-mile course took advantage of every nuance of the terrain. Hills, a long down slope, a bridge over a reflection pond, plenty of trees, and, the piece de resistance, a walk across the I-5 freeway onto a huge median island that contained the Peace Arch. As the ring stewards took on the role of crossing guards, a band of seven carts, dogs, and handlers paraded across I-5, to the amazement, amusement, and sometimes bewilderment of the stopped passengers in the cars. Of course, a couple of people weren't quite so cooperative, but all in all it was quite a spectacle. The teams crossed under the looming 10-plus-story marble monument onto Canadian soil and then back again. All of the teams seemed conditioned enough to make the haul without much problem. In the end, 7 of the 14 teams successfully completed the test and earned NDD titles: Bandit and Phil Chagnon, Tish and David Denis, Lexi and Sean Ebnet, Lou-Lou and Veronica Lindstedt, Sophy and Naomi Packer, Max and Dan Smith, and Brelle and Bernadette VanKleveran.

The day ended with the awards ceremony, and in typical northwest style it looked more like a potlatch than any awards ceremony I'd witnessed before. The ring favors were large plastic tubs full of dog and people treats, event stationery pads, towels, rawhides, and other odds and ends. The very lucky new titleholders got beautiful handmade harness racks crafted by Sean Ebnet, as well as huge rosettes that really made the finishers feel that it was their special day.

Veronica Lindstedt and Lu-Lu with their little red wagon were the only team to successfully test for and gain both the CKC and the BMDCA title that weekend. With a 50 percent passing rate, it is evident that the Northwest is the next new hotbed of draft work excitement. I hope that this level of participation can continue, and I look forward to seeing these new draft people at the next test. I'd like to congratulate everyone who earned a title that weekend. The training is paying off. And for those that didn't quite make it, I would like to encourage you to try again. Most of you are missing only on single elements, which can only get better with practice.

Thanks to David and Coral Denis on the Canadian side, and Sean and Lisa Ebnet and BMDCA Test Secretary Krista Johnson on the United States side, as well as the many volunteers who came together and worked hard to make this event run so smoothly and successfully. Hope that it won't be a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Freight haul through the Peace Arch



Newsletter

The GB Carting Group

******UPDATE******

Committee Members
contact details:

Tom Murray - Chairman Tel: 01621 778942
email: w_murray@lineone.net
Wendy Murray - Treasurer *as above*
Bruce Hellingsworth - Secretary
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Keith Brown - Chief Coordinator

GB WORKING CART WEEKEND

REPORT

Wellington Country Park is certainly a lovely venue to hold a training / first draft. There is plenty of camping space and walking areas for your dog.

We were the first to arrive, feeling really uncertain how the ground was going to be for camping, after all the rain we'd had and the fact that right up until the Friday, more rain was to follow, according to the weather forecast... How wrong they were! The sun came out with a vengence over both days and helped to make the weekend a great success.

Saturday started with a display for the general public at 12.30pm, which went down really well and we had about ten decorated carts on both days.

Saturday we were joined by a variety of different breeds, Leonbergers, a Newfoundland, Pyrenean and we were priveliged to have Luca joining us to do a 'first draft', a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog.

Luca is 19months old and what an embassador, a lovely boy with a supberb temperment. He took to carting straight the way after guidence and supervision from our highly experienced trainers, Roy Toms, Lee Palmer and not forgetting Tom Murray.

LUCA PULLING TRAINING WHEELS.....

.....MOVING ON TO PULLING A CART

CHLOE GETTING USED TO THE HARNESS,

LOTS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE HANDLER AND TRAINER, CHLOE PULLING THE LOG...

AS YOU CAN SEE THE TRAINER WAS STILL SUFFERING FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE NIGHT BEFORE....

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GB WORKING CART WEEKEND

EVENING BARBEQUE

After an exhausting day on the Saturday we decided it would be nice to relax and chill out with a Barbeque, downed by a couple of glasses of wine. Chief cooks were Janet and Dave Simpson, tentatively watched by all dogs concerned, waiting to catch the oddscrap.

After the barbeque, it was decided we should have our own competition on the carting course, men against women, each carting with a dog of the oppositions choice.

Lee Palmer with Flora.
Unfortunately Flora had to show Lee around the course!

We couldn't show all the pics as we dont want to embarrass all the trainers but I hasten to add that Girl Power ruled.....

Sue with Henry
What a class act and was extremely hard to follow by the men!

ON THE WAY TO OPEN – Or Fidelio's Top Ten List for Drafting

by Diana Gerba (with help from Fidelio)

Honestly, I never thought I'd hook up Fidelio to a cart…he just seemed like such a free-spirited goofy Berner. And then one day we were down at Chris and Tom House's place and I was curious, so we hooked him up to his dad's cart. Be it instinct, breeding, or trust in me…Fidelio accepted the harness and cart cheerfully and walked on down the road without a problem. And that was the beginning of our grand adventure. We both learned a lot along the way and made many new friends. I'm hoping that by sharing my story and some tidbits we've learned, it will help others who are either out there carting or trying to decide if they should cart. My advice is do it.

AT WORK IN THE RING

A NEW NOVICE DRAFT TITLE

MARIE, DIANA & CERENA CELEBRATE NEW TITLES

In March of 2004, Tina Gaines lent Fidelio and me her cart and we went to Norcal's Beginning Carting seminar. Jim Maxwell and Larry Bohlig gave us a grand start to the world of drafting. We went to our first Novice draft test in May of 2004 with confidence, but failed from the get go. Those of you who were there might remember Fidelio going into a play bow in front of a 5 foot paper lion during the obedience section.

Through the summer, we practiced with Marie Cushen and her boy, d'Artagnon, in the park and up in Sugar Pine with Fred Helmbold and his Abbey girl. Fred really took Fidelio and me under his wing and helped us over many a hurdle. In September of that year we tried again at the Sierra West test. Fidelio was awesome, he did the maneuvering like a champ and went up some outrageous hills. He had improved…but this time it was me. I ran him into a log during the freight hall. I lost focus. Later I was also told I was out of control on the downhill. (Now, I'm not so sure about that, but it did get me working on my "slow" command and for that I'm grateful.) So Fidelio failed one and I failed one…we made a pact, he and I, that next year was going to be our year.

Spring 2005 came. We were out there training with Marie and d'Artagnon, and Cerena and her German Shepard, Mariah, and then we all went to Norcals's Wine Country Working Dogs Retreat and their two day Draft test in Calistoga. During the first draft test, Fidelio moved his foot waiting for the load, but it was really handler error.

Fidelio was getting increasingly stubborn and I feared the next day's test. As we entered the ring I looked up to they sky and asked for some special help from over the Rainbow Bridge. "Satchmo, your buddy needs you now…." All I can say is I thank Fidelio's entire cheering section…without you all, here on earth and up above, we'd have never made it. The maneuvering section was definitely not Fidelio's most stellar performance and the judges took over 20 minutes to decide we had passed. After a hilly but successful freight haul, Fidelio got his Novice Title and we celebrated appropriately. Cerena, Mariah, Marie, d'Artagnon, Fidelio and I all got our Novice titles that weekend. We popped a fantastic bottle of Champagne (actually several) and Fidelio got his steak dinner.

The next week however, we went to the doggie chiropractor and found out one vertebrae in Fidelio's back and a few metacarpals were out of alignment…his stubbornness seemed to have a cause. We took off 3 weeks from drafting and just walked, swam and had fun…and then with the chiropractor's approval, we hooked him up and took him out. Fidelio was happy and fine. So, we decided to try for our Open in Arizona.

We started training more, and Fidelio's stubborn streak again increased. I was forced to rethink training three weeks before the Open Draft Test. The chiropractor said all was well, but it became increasingly obvious that Fidelio was ring sour. Take him out to do real work and his tail was wagging and he was happy. Show him a maneuvering ring and he turned into Eeyore. He'd just stand there with that look on his face as if to say, "I don't know. Might not be good for a dog to do that." Figuring out Fidelio was not easy. This time it was my horse buddies who came to the rescue. With their advice we started to conquer Fidelio's stubbornness. Everything was fine until six days before the test.

We had a near accident going downhill on a narrow path. Fidelio's harness started going forward and bunching up on him,

(I had forgotten the second belly band). He was hauling 90 lbs and he stopped dead on the hill. Luckily, Pat Helmbold was with me. Pat pulled back on the cart so I could try to get the harness right, but Fidelio's hind legs started sliding forward, and he started to flip over. I put my arm under his girth and just picked up his butt, set him down and got the cart positioned at an angle to the hill. I really don't know where the strength came from to do that. The result of our calamity was that Fidelio had slightly torqued the vertebra in his back again. The chiropractor thought he'd be fine for the test…but was sure he was sore. He advised no more training just let him rest. It's now 3 days before the test. When I looked at the harness it seemed that all the weight was coming down on his back right under the one inch strap. So, off I went to Joann Fabrics and REI and fashioned a pad to soften and spread out the weight. I called Jim Maxwell and he cautioned me about changing equipment right before a test. I called Pat Helmbold and asked if she could bring her sewing kit with her Arizona.

Then we loaded up the car to go to Arizona with all our gear and the parts for our new padded harness. In my heart I knew Fidelio had it in him...but in the end, ya just never know. So we made another pact, my boy and I were going on a road trip and the goal was to just have fun. Test or no test … title or no title … we were going to the Grand Canyon.

We had decided to caravan to Flagstaff with Pat and Fred Helmbold and their Berner girl, Abbey. Fred and I were the only two entries for Open. Now, Fred has been my Obi-Wan Carting Master. He had not only taken us under his wing, but had even built us a light weight Speed Racer cart. It was an honor and a bit humbling to be going to the draft test with him. I hoped that Fidelio and I were going to live up to the faith he had in us.

When we met at the Motel 6 in Barstow, two days before the test, I showed Pat and Fred my "padding idea" for the harness and that night Pat set to sewing. The next morning, we tried the new harness on and carted around Motel 6. It didn't seem to bother him, so off we went to Flagstaff. The day of the draft test was cool. I knew since we were in Open that we'd finally pull a good number and be in the early part of the day. But number One??? I somehow hadn't figured that into the plan. I usually got to see others doing the course and could memorize it and come up with my plans…but not so this time.

Steve Dudley and Val Horney were the judges. Steve had been my judge at the first draft test and had witnessed "Fidelio, the bouncing Berner" in front of the paper lion. So there we were…ready to go in. The obedience section was not stellar, but we did it. Harnessing went fine. Both judges were looking at my "padded" addition to the Siwash Harness. Fidelio was handling the maneuvering course like a champ and then he saw Chris House standing in the field taking pictures of him. He just perked up as if to say, "Oh my gosh! I didn't know you were here!!" and with that he started to trot off to see Chris. I clapped, whistled and jumped up and down like a crazy woman till he remembered we were working and he hooked back on to me. Chris meanwhile had turned into a tree. Fidelio and I continued on. At the unload I decided not to chance it and put him in a down stay. That was the first time I ever did that…(we always just did a stand…but with the pressure on…I'm really glad I did the down stay).

Now, they had put the unload in the middle of the course. Every other course I'd been on the unload had been at the end. In the past, as soon as I'd hand over the load and we did our say hello to the steward, Fidelio's tail would go up and he'd pick up speed and we'd fly out of the ring. Okay so here we are in Arizona, the exit is 20 yards in front of us and we're in the middle of the course. We need to make a 90 degree turn and then go into the slow. Well, I knew my dog and I knew what he'd do…so I also knew what I had to do. I got a step out in front of him, he started picking up speed, but I was prepared. I gave him a hand signal and strong verbal command to turn left…he took that turn fast, and I mean fast…we didn't do a wheelie, but it set us up great for the slow. With that out of the way all was left was the back, which he loves to do and get out of the ring … and boy did that real good.

The long down went great even though I was a nervous Nellie behind the blanket…and then we were off onto the freight haul. It wasn't the steep hills of Calistoga, there were inclines but it was the divots, ruts and the soft earth of the forest floor that made for a long haul. We never were on a path…but it was just Fred and Abbey and Fidelio and me out there on the trail. It was just like being up in Sugar Pine and going out for a walk with Fred. We both did just fine. When we got back the hoopla started…we had all passed…Fred & Abbey and Me & Fidelio. Mt. Visions Cooper's Fidelio had his Draft Dog Title. It was real proud moment when Steve Dudley handed us the ribbon and complimented us on how much Fidelio and I had improved. The Champagne flowed…and flowed. Abbey and Fidelio both got New York Strip Steaks for dinner. We took pictures and walked around with the biggest grins on our faces for our entire time in Arizona.

FIDELIO EARNS HIS DRAFT DOG TITLE IN ARIZONA

So here's my top 10 list of things to remember when you're on the road to Open.

• **Obedience is the building block of everything**. Do obedience, obedience, and more obedience. Get it done first without the cart. Everyone was always impressed with Fidelio's back up….and to be honest it took 2 minutes to train it with the cart. But, he had already learned the backup for Rally. You have to do 3 steps backwards in the heel position. Then I moved on to

doing a little freestyle with him and got him to back up 12 steps or so for a dance routine. When I put the cart on him, it was no problem at all. He was already totally solid on the command.

• Mix up the training. Fidelio and I would train with and without the cart. People in the park thought I was bit nuts when they'd see us…but oh well…maybe we are. I'd use all the commands and we'd run around trees, go thru narrows (rows of picnic benches were great for this…even try backing up thru the narrows), do pace changes (especially slows on the downhill), and wind sprints up hills. It got both of us in shape.

• Go to as many drafting seminars and Kart Kamps and matches as possible. Besides getting your dog out there with other dogs…camaraderie in drafting is key. Drafting is nothing like conformation. You're not competing against anyone. You meet others who are either starting out or at a higher level than you. The tips, the advice and help are awesome. Fidelio and I were lucky to be at the inception of Kart Kamp with Fred Helmbold. He ran us ragged up hills, through the woods, over to Pioneer days, thru Old Town Columbia on the way to dinner, and then we carted at 11:00 at night back to the cars after we closed the restaurant down. Kart Kamp was so much fun, Fred hosted Kart Kamp II at his house in Sugar Pine. We had eleven people, Jim Maxwell came up to help teach and to judge the practice match…and again we went to dinner in old town and closed the restaurant down. Kart Kamp II (otherwise affectionately known as the MudFest in Calistoga) was put on by NorCal. It was a grand wet wonderful event. If you're thinking of carting, keep an eye out for Kart Kamp IV.

FIDELIO & D"ARTAGNON VISITING RALPH LAUREN

DRAFT TEST IN A BAG

• Build a Work Ethic…no horsing around…horse around when the harness is off. I remember Steve Dudley telling me I had to build a work ethic. I really didn't know if I could get my goof dog to be serious. Stubborn he could be, but serious? I'm proud to say he knows when he's working now. We were at arts festival in Carmel Valley and he had his cart on. I dropped some flowers some 50 feet back. I put him in a stand and walked back to get the flowers. Two other dogs went flying by him chasing a ball, a kid dropped a hot dog about 3 feet from him, and the rock band started drum solo. Fidelio stood stock still. When I finally got back to his side the people at the picnic tables applauded. Now, I remember when none of that would have happened…especially not nabbing that hot dog. A work ethic takes time, steady work, rewards and praise and your dog realizing when the harness is on he's working. One day you're surprised because you know your dog has arrived. And I truly believe they get proud…cause that's sure what it looked like to me. He was doing his job….he had that stately Berner stance there in Carmel Valley when all the craziness was about him. So, I guess even a goof dog can get serious.

• Practice with others and be inventive. I was lucky to have someone nearby who was as excited about carting as I was. Marie Cushen and I met two and sometimes three times a week. D'Artagnon and Fidelio carted in parks all over the county. We set up fake courses, did freight hauls around the lake, and even got invited to participate in the Halloween Haunted Forest Bash. We'd go to Stanford Shopping center and practice maneuvering around hordes of people and even go thru the Ralph Lauren Store. When we did long downs people would want to pet the dogs and we'd tell them, "no…not right now their doing a long down stay." Well, dang, they'd all wait to see if the dogs moved, and then we'd start drawing more of a crowd. All these people just watching two dogs laying there….and we'd do five and six minute downs. People sure are strange. Afterwards we'd let everyone pet them and then take the dogs to the creamery for vanilla ice cream. Occasionally tourist buses would stop and the dogs would have to pose for pictures for all of them. The boys loved it…carting is fun.

• Massage, Chiropractor and warm-ups. We all warm-up before a softball game, love to get a massage and go to the chiropractor after screwing up our knee sliding into second. Well, our dogs are the real athletes in carting. When you're putting the weight on them I think they deserve to get that "athlete" treatment...Diana Thomson, a Massage therapist was at Kart Kamp III. She was there for our dogs, not us…and boy did they enjoy it. We learned a lot and I know massage really helped Fidelio as did his Chiropractor. In fact, without the Chiropractor putting things right I'm not sure Fidelio would still be liking carting. And warm-ups. Well again, it was at Kart Kamp III we started talking more about it. You just can't ask your napping dog to get out of your car and hook him up and ask him to pull 100lbs. But I've seen it done…and I think it's mostly

we're just not thinking…we love our dogs and don't want to hurt them. But we wouldn't run a 5K without warming up….think about it. Get their kinks and yours out too and then hook them up.

• **Equipment** There so much to learn when you start. Again the Norcal class and Kart Kamp are places to ask questions on carts and harnesses. But then there's the small stuff. Hauling weights around gets hard…I found it a lot easier to get Marcy Grip weights which have handles built in. They're much easier to pick up. Also, a bike pump. Not being an avid biker I didn't realize how often you need to pump up your tires. I was seen asking Fidelio to pull his cart thru sand with tires that were so under-deflated. Well, someone should have hooked me up to that cart to see the difference proper inflation makes. Again, I'll mention the padded brace I put on the harness to spread out the weight. Check it out, it's easy to make and it just makes sense not to push down on one vertebrae. My last equipment tip is a "Draft course in a bag"…there's a picture here. Everything fit into my pumpkin bag. Setting up a course would take Marie Cushen and I about 4 minutes. We used the pumpkin bag for the load, two wood slats for the narrows, a long ribbon for our movable object, CD covers for the weave polls, stuffed animals for distractions, a target pole for the back-up, a water bowl and bottle to mark 360 degree turns, and there ya have it….a draft course in a pumpkin bag.

• **Sometimes it takes a village to figure it out**. Fidelio is a pretty smart cookie and I admit, he has my number. It seemed like there was always a new challenge with the boy. Some I could figure out, but sometimes it took others watching us to see what was going on. I'd call or travel up to my master carters to ask them for advice. Have someone videotape you and your dog carting….that shows you a whole lot. Just don't stay stuck in a rut, find the solution. When I figured out Fidelio was ring sour, I mentioned it was really my horse friends that saved me. They had all seen this in their dressage training. They told me never to practice the whole course. Run into the ring and do just one maneuver and then run out. Change it up…don't let it get predictable…which I had done. Well anyway, that's what got him over being ring sour.

• **Know Your Dog … be able to read him and trust him.** This really comes with just working your dog. You get to know what he'll do when he's hooked up to his cart…which I've noticed is different from when you're just walking him on a lead. If you cart enough, you just know. You know when he's gotta pee, you know if he performs for a crowd and loves the clapping and cheering, you know how he's going to take that turn, and you know which distractions might get his attention. And that means you're ready for them. You also start noticing how they like to take a hill. Fidelio would always veer to the left going uphill, so I'd take that into consideration on how we'd approach it especially if it was steep. I taught Fidelio to traverse the hill on the uphill…but he figured out that if it's a steep downhill traversing it was easier especially with a 90lb. load. If you cart enough the neatest thing is you learn you can trust your dog to make some decisions too. They're not stupid…it's those handler errors that really flunk tests.

FIDELIO AT THE SOUTH RIM OF THE GRAND CANYON

• **During the test tidbits**. Okay, here's the list that others told me and they were right. Walk the course and memorize it. When you're on that walk thru, think of alternative approaches, especially the narrows. I remember a course at a match with such a tight turn that there was hardly any setup room for the narrows. I heard my Obi-Wan Carting Master in my head say "Have another plan in mind and the force will be with you!" When you're in the thick of it, well let's just say there is a tad of pressure that builds inside you…even for the coolest of us. After the walk through make sure to check to see the load fits in your cart securely…and I emphasize securely. I've seen things fall out. Before you step into the ring…get your dog hooked on. Do what you need to do…cookies, a fast obedience run thru, a bunch of tricks with high rewards, anything but get him or her hooked on before you step into that ring. Now, everyone says take your time, eat a mint (for that adrenalin breath), and breathe when you're in there…and they are right. But the biggest, most important, most gigantic thing to remember is to keep your focus and your dog. If it's slipping away…just stop dead, breathe, look at your dog and remember where you are and where you need to go. Get your dog hooked on to ya again and then go. If I had done that in the Sierra West test, I'm sure I wouldn't have run into that log. If I had done that at the Calistoga test, I'm sure we would have passed on the first day. Oh, the should of, would of, could of been's…they are big time in draft test world.

• **But above all my Top Ten Tidbits is HAVE FUN**. Drafting is really grand sport but we need to remember it's not about the titles. Don't get me wrong, they are wonderful goals and I treasure the ribbons, the photos and the memories…but it's about the bond with our dog and the working together. Going to the retirement home and hauling groceries home from Safeway for the residents, having little kids throw their arms around Fidelio's neck when he is pulling his cart in parades, carrying everyone s picnic lunch to the top of the big hill in the park, taking his cart loaded with flowers for a walk downtown, helping out on Park Cleanup day, or just walking down the trail with my boy. It's all about working with your dog and being a team. So get carting… it's truly worth it.

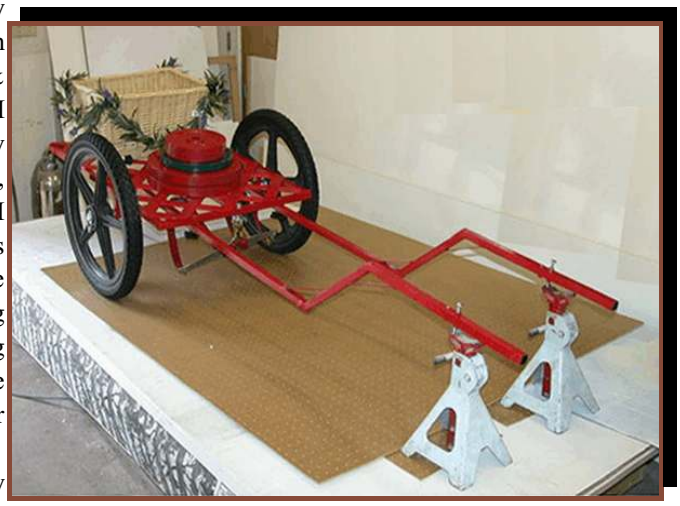
And yes, Fidelio and I did get to the Grand Canyon, and we carted around the South Rim with Pat, Fred and Abbey.

ABBEY'S DRAFTING STORY

(Put into print by Fred Helmbold)

My name is Sugar Pines First Lady, but those who know me call me Abbey. What follows is my story of learning to pull a cart, becoming a Novice Draft Dog, and finally earning my Draft Dog Title.

Life started by being one of twelve puppies born to my mom, Nancy – or officially Deerparks Gold Medal, ND. My dad Baron Von Why, was a draft dog, but never earned the recognition of a title. While the other puppies in my litter left for other homes, I was chosen to stay with my parents. Growing up in the home of my Caretakers, Pat & Fred Helmbold, was a fun time. I was allowed to attend puppy school, basic obedience and later, advanced obedience classes. I earned my Canine Good Citizen's title. These classes became the basis of learning to be a Draft Dog - without solid obedience training you will not get anywhere in the Berner world or please your Caretakers.



ABBEY'S CUSTOM MADE CART

Steve Dudley introduced my Caretaker, Fred to drafting and later, Jim Maxwell and Larry Bohlig in Nor Cal's 'First Draft Seminar' were instrumental in kindling an interest and later a passion for Drafting. Their help and guidance through Fred, has helped me learn to become a member of the Draft Team - Abby and Fred.

When my mother, Nancy, crossed over the Rainbow Bridge, I chose to become Fred's Draft Dog.

While working on obedience training, we also practiced the draft elements: backing, slows, turns and, of course, the stay. When we were drafting, we would look for objects to work with - trees for turning around or serpentines, gates, or park benches moved to be narrows. Practice was fun because training elements were always varied and once learned, they became a part of our program run thrus. Training usually consisted of the elements of a draft test: we started to concentrate with a basic obedience pattern, then the harness and hitching up, maneuvering a course and then a long walk pulling progressively more and more weight. Once I showed Fred I would work with him, we frequently worked off lead, so after receiving my NDD, working off lead became routine.

FRED & ABBEY ON A PRACTICE RUN

Because my Caretakers and I live in the mountains, most of our training was done by ourselves; we lost the benefits of working and training with groups of other people. There are advantages to having someone else watch your work, correct errors, and offer other training ideas. Another person or group will make training more fun and easier. Our solution to solitary training was to train weekly in the same area where dog-training classes were being held. We would also practice at different parks and school grounds to get the feel of varied terrain, and situations. We changed some routes when possible and looked for different ways to approach the same obstacle. Training time also needs to vary, sometimes a few minutes, or occasionally an extended period. Ending a training session on a happy note always made me want to go again! Fred also held a couple of Kart Kamps, which brought together others for a weekend of work and fun. Stories heralding our Kart Kamps have already been written, and don't need repeating.

To attempt my Novice Draft Title we started training in March and by June, my Caretaker entered the Draft Test in Williams, Arizona set for July of 2004. Fred and I had to go by ourselves, while Pat stayed home with a litter of new puppies. We almost hit a tree on the freight haul, because my Caretaker Fred lost his focus and concentration. It is so important for the Caretaker member of the team to maintain concentration on each element and to plan ahead for unforeseen events. Fortunately we passed the Novice test and were asked to redo the maneuvering course for an apprentice judge to evaluate. Just for fun, my Caretaker Fred volunteered to try the test without lead - as in an open test. To make Fred

FRED & ABBEY WAITING FOR THE AWARDS CEREMONY

look good, I passed the entire test off lead - what fun!

Following an unsuccessful attempt for an Open Title in October, life got serious and Fred taught me several new elements:

DIANA AND FRED CELEBRATE THEIR NEW DRAFT DOG TITLES!

1. Because I didn't like to back up with him in front of me: he now stands at the heel position – and I will back up 6-8 feet for him!
2. We have developed a team effort for the freight haul: he guides me in the general route, and then walks with me while I choose the course.
3. We have built a strong work ethic, which I show by either happily wagging my tail or just putting my head down and pulling when faced with more strenuous work.
4. Caretaker Fred has worked hard to maintain his focus while working.
5. Our preparation included a daylong practice with my friend Fidelio and his Caretaker Diana Gerba.

Ready for competition, we entered the Draft Test in Flagstaff, Arizona this past July. Fidelio and I were the only Open Entries. Fidelio and Diana went first – while Fidelio made Diana work, they passed the first parts of the test! I wanted to test my Caretaker Fred, so preparing for the Harness and Hitch,

SUGAR PINES FIRST LADY, NEW DD

I tested his attention, but we too, passed the test! Although the freight haul didn't have the long steep grades we practiced for, it took us through some rough uneven terrain, over hill and dale and around many ruts and obstacles. Fred directed me on the course and let me pick my path – what a team! Combined with the high elevation, we and our Caretakers came back well worn, tested and happy.

My left leg and particularly the hock, had been giving me trouble due to a youthful injury. Fred was so concerned with my occasional limping and the stress of pulling 80 pounds, that he made me a deal: "pass the test, and you won't have to pull 80 pounds again." We passed the Open Test, and true to his word, Fred carried the weights from the test back to the car!

We had to wait and watch the rest of the Test, but having already passed, the wait to receive our awards was no problem. We finished the day in celebration - my Caretaker feeding me a New York steak, and sharing Champagne with all our friends. What a day!

Our trip to Arizona was completed the next day when we carted around the rim of the Grand Canyon, and posed for pictures with our Caretakers. Tourists got quiet a thrill from seeing us. You'd think they'd never had seen a working Draft Dog with the amount of pictures that they took, but perhaps they knew we had just gotten our Open title!

Putting together traces for draft practice.

You will need suitable rope or strap 18 feet in length.

Non sheathed rope that is flexible is best as it will become abraded as you use it. To each end attach snaps.

The snaps should be big enough to engage the steel attachment rings on your harness. Four and a half feet equidistant from the snaps affix a spreader bar

You can make the spreader bar with notches

or drill holes and thread the rope thru them and affix them in some fashion so the spreader bar remains at 4.5 feet equidistant from the snaps. The spreader bar serves to keep the traces comfortably off the dogs flank while engaged in work. Without a spreader bar the traces will eventually ensnare the dog's hind legs. At the rear/apex of the traces

attach a carabiner or quick release D-ring.

This is for attaching loads as desired and as the dog progresses in its draft capabilities

This pic shows a trailer tire with rim still in it, my dogs have advanced to this level of conditioning. I recommend though you begin with a simple rubber trailer tire of similar proportions to that in the picture. The traces are easy to make. Give it a try and let me know if you have any question or problems along the way. Happy Trails!

Dog Carts and Draft Dog Training: Directions to Convert a European Style Hand Wagon into a "Period" Dog Wagon

By Lady Rachel of Bhakail, East Kingdom
(Also known as Rebecca Morris)
Figures by Lord Bendan O'Moran
(Also known as Michael Moran)

Tournaments Illuminated Magazine, Issue #150, Spring 2004, Pages 8 - 13.
Published by the Society For Creative Anachronism, ISSN: 0732-6645
(Minor Revisions: 4/03/2005, 6/24/2005)

Introduction

A 50-pound or larger dog pulling a small wagon (Figure 1) is useful at an SCA event. He can pull armor, pull a child, and help with water bearing and shopping. In period, tradesmen used dogs to make local cart deliveries. In 1486, Dame Juliana Berners mentions in her book titled, Boke of St. Albans, three types of English draft dogs; turnspit, butcher and midden dogs (1.). Turnspit dogs were small dogs which were used to turn the cooking spit (2.). Butchers used their large dogs make meat deliveries (2.). Midden dogs were used to haul garbage to the midden or garbage dump. There is a dog cart illumination on folio 110v in the 14th century manuscript commonly called the Smithfield Decretals (British Library Manuscript Royal 10 E IV). During 14th century in northern France, dogs were used to make local cart deliveries (3.). Dr. Johannes Caius wrote in his 1576 book, Of Englishe Dogges, about four types of English draft dogs; Water Drawer, Turnspit, Tinker Cur, and Butcher Dog. The Water Drawer was used to draw water out of wells "by a wheel which they turn about, by the moving of their burthenous bodies." The Tinker Cur carried the tools of the traveling tinker in a dog pack-saddle or backpack.

Figure 1: Ladder Wagon and Vixen, the author's dog.

The royal families of Europe frequently used dogs to introduce their children to the equestrian arts of riding and carriage driving. Around the age of four, a royal prince would graduate from riding lessons on a dog to his first pony (4.). In 1608, the 7 year old - future Louis XIII of France, was given a miniature carriage to which he hitched his two dogs, Pataut and Lion (5.). At this time, France was a leading innovator in carriage building (6.), and it is not surprising the young prince was given a miniature version. During the reign of the Roman emperor Nero, the racing stables of Rome went on strike. The strike was broken by the threat to replace horses with dogs in the chariot races (7.). Working dogs were used as draft dogs for carts into the early 20th century (8.). Beginning in the early 19th century, humane societies lobbied for laws to regulate the use of cart dogs. In 1840, canine carts were banned in London. In 1855, all vehicles pulled by draft dogs were outlawed in Great Britain (9.).

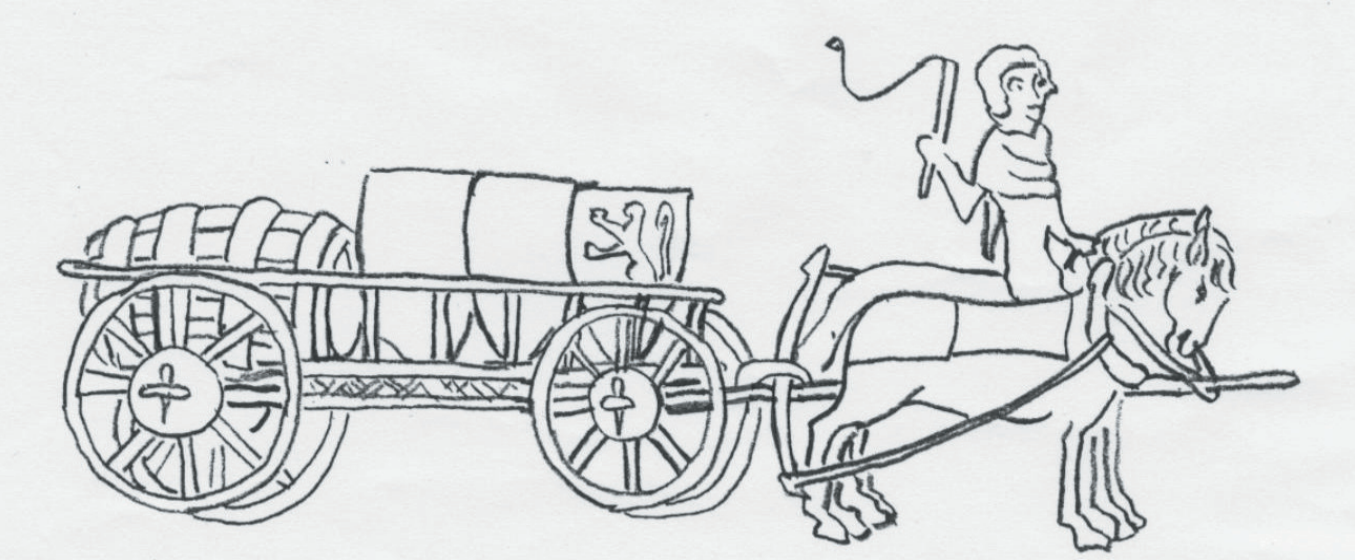


Figure 2: Drawing of a Fourteenth Century Ladder Wagon by Rebecca Morris. Drawing is after Jehan de Grise, Romance of Alexander, c. 1338 – 1344. Bodleian Library, Oxford University. MS. Bodl. 264. Folio 83 Verso.

A number of manuscripts show horse wagons (figure 2) that appear to be similar in shape to vintage European hand wagons (Figure 1). This type of wagon is called a "ladder wagon" because the sides resemble a ladder. Sometimes they are called "goat" or "pumpkin" wagons. These hand wagons are similar in size to the red metal hand wagons that are frequently used at SCA events in the United States. Vintage ladder wagons come in three sizes: small, medium, and large. The wagon in Figure 1 is the medium size. They can be bought on eBay or from antique dealers. Reproduction ladder wagons are cheaper and also may be bought on eBay or garden stores that sell garden decorations.

This article will cover how to convert a ladder wagon into a period model of a horse ladder wagon. It will outline how to train a medium to large dog to pull your wagon. In addition, patterns for the breast harness and shafts are given. This article assumes the reader has basic woodworking skills, in addition to sewing or leather working skills.

At this point I wish to avoid confusion by giving some definitions:

Cart: Vehicle with two wheels in parallel. This article will not cover adapting a cart to a dog.

Wagon: Vehicle with four wheels.

Dog Cart: For this article, a 'dog cart' is any wheeled vehicle pulled by a dog. There is also a 19th century horse cart called a "Dog Cart" which was designed to carry hunting dogs under the passenger seats.

Shafts: The poles that extend from the wagon body and are parallel to the draft animal. The draft animal steers the cart or wagon with the shafts.

Traces: Straps that attach near the wagon body and to the harness. The draft animal pulls on the traces and moves the wagon. Sometimes the traces are connected to the shaft ends.

Bridle: The part of the harness that attaches to the draft animal's head. With dogs, a simple collar may be used instead of a bridle.

Reins: Two straps used to signal the draft animal. With dog carts the reins may be attached to a bridle or to a simple collar.

Dog carting: The dog handler walks a dog on a leash while the dog pulls a wagon. Any size dog can be trained for dog carting as long as the vehicle and weight pulled is appropriate to the dog's size. The rule of thumb is a dog can pull up to three times his weight with a wheeled vehicle. When calculating the maximum cargo weight, don't forget to subtract the vehicle weight from the total weight.

Dog driving: A large dog pulls a wagon while the dog handler rides in the wagon. Voice commands or reins, usually both, are used to control the dog. This article does not cover dog driving.

Training

Training should be started even before the wagon conversion and breast harness are complete. It is important for the dog to enjoy dog carting. Once he learns to enjoy carting he will eventually take pride in having a job. My dog, Vixen, whines and runs around when I take the harness and wagon out. She cannot wait to pull the wagon. The dog should already know how to walk quietly on a leash beside you. He does not need to be so well trained he can win obedience titles. He does need to have good basic manners on a leash. Fifteen minutes a day over a week or two should be enough for your dog to learn the basics of carting. Treats and praise are strong motivators. Hot dogs, thinly sliced, are cheap and get my dog's undivided attention. If you or the dog gets frustrated or angry, immediately stop for the day. There is always tomorrow to try again.

Four voice commands need to be taught. You may use any word you want as the voice command, but you must be consistent or you will confuse the dog. The voice commands can be taught and reviewed any time you take your dog for a walk around the neighborhood. The most important command is for the dog to stop. I use the word 'whoa' for my dog to stop beside me. 'Halt' or 'stop' will work too.

Next, you want your dog to turn left or right on command. I use the words 'right' and 'left' with a light tug on the leash in the correct direction. 'Gee' and 'haw' are the traditional driving terms for right and left.

The command to walk backwards is the hardest of the four voice commands to teach. It is very useful when there is not enough room to make a u-turn. Initially, I push on the dog's chest and force him to take a step or two backwards while I say the word 'back.' Once the dog understands what is wanted, I stop pushing on the chest when I give the command. Your goal with the back up command is for the dog to back up a couple of feet in a straight line.

If your dog has never worn a harness, he needs to become familiar with the feel of the straps on his back and chest. For this purpose, a cheap walking harness from the local pet store will serve fine. Just put it on and let him get used to it.

Some dogs are initially scared of the wagon when they pull it. They try to get away from the sound of the wagon and become frightened when they cannot escape the sound. Since you don't want your dog hurt by the wagon or the wagon damaged if the dog runs away, you need to get him used to the sound of something following him. This training method also trains the dog to pull. Put a harness on the dog. Get a long rope and a gallon milk jug filled with water. Tie the rope end to the milk jug. Tie the other end to the harness. Now walk your dog with the leash on his collar and let him pull the milk jug. Give him lots of praise and reassurance. He may want to stop and look back at the milk jug. After a few days he should be comfortable with pulling the milk jug around. Now you are ready to introduce the dog to pulling the wagon.

Introduce your dog to the look and smell of the wagon. You don't want the wagon itself to scare the dog. I recommend you leave the wagon someplace where your dog can check it out in his leisure for a day or so. Try leaving it in the living room or the yard if your dog is allowed to run free in the yard.

Put the breast harness on the dog and hitch him to the wagon. At first some dogs do not like being confined between the shafts. Treats and praise will get him over this dislike. Slowly walk your dog while he pulls the wagon. The wagon will sound different than the milk jug and he may want to stop and look back at it. After a few days he should get used to pulling the wagon and you can train him to stop, to turn, and to back up the wagon with the voice commands. You also need to learn to maneuver him and

the wagon in tight spots. You must watch where the wagon is because the dog has no idea how wide the wagon is. On his own he will bump into people and knock things over.

Breast Harness

The breast harness (Figure 3a) is period to the Middle Ages and is fairly simple to make. It can be made of strong leather or webbing straps. The straps should be at least an inch and half wide. The harness needs to be padded across the chest and back. Real or fake sheepskin fleece works fine as padding.

The breech section (Figure 3b) of the harness allows the dog to brake the wagon and keeps the wagon from overrunning the dog on down grades. He also uses it to back the wagon. The simplest breech to make is a 'false breech.' It is just a strap between the shafts and is located two or three inches behind the dog. When braking, the wagon it should come in contact below the base of the tail and above the top of the legs. When he pulls the wagon it should not touch him. It should be near enough to him to engage easily to slow the wagon as needed.

The two traces are made of the same strong material as the harness. They are used to transfer the pulling power of the dog to the wagon. They are long straps with clips on both ends. The length of the traces should be the distance from the D-ring on the harness to the pulling points on the wagon. See the section about making shafts.

When you make the harness, remember to make the inside surfaces smooth so the harness will not chaff the dog's skin.

Dog carting harnesses can be bought and they range in price from $30 to $100. A short list of sources for ready-made cart items is at the end of the article.

Figure 3b: Full breeching. The author's dog, Vixen.

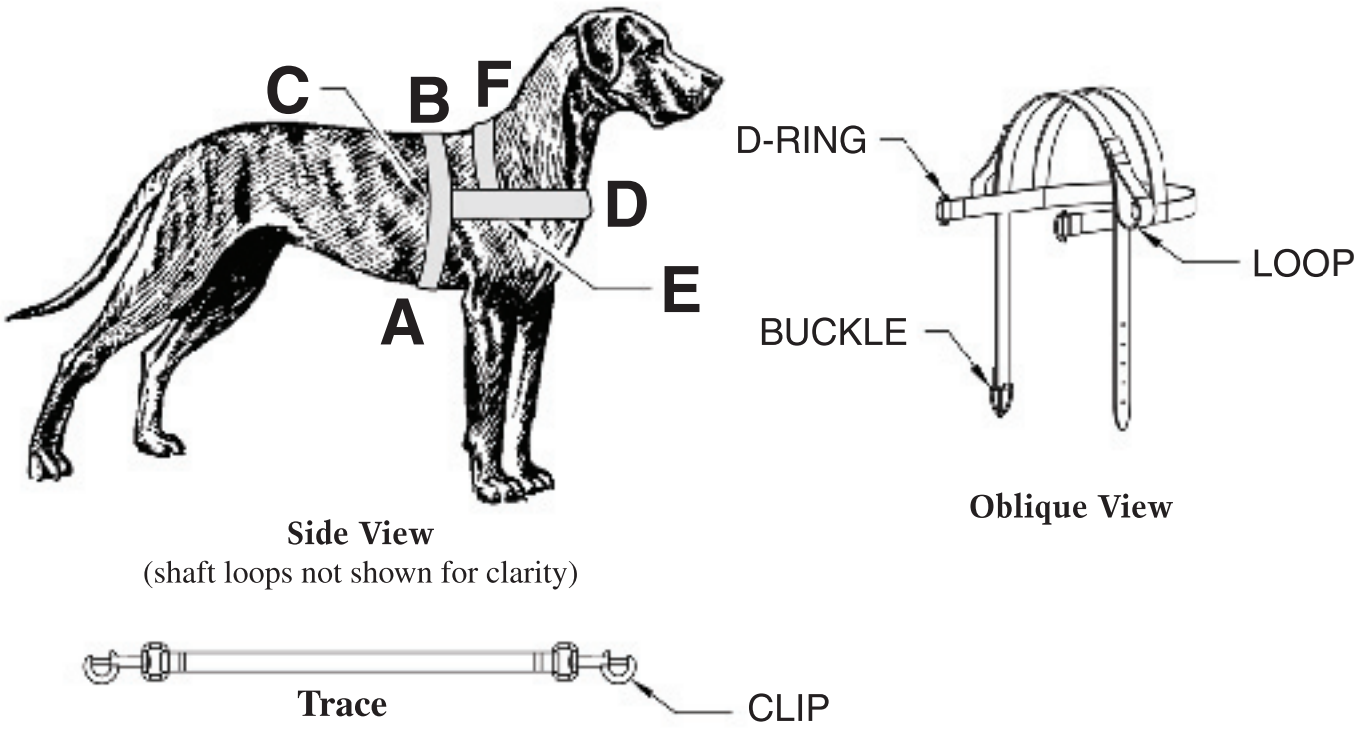


Figure 3a: Breast Harness. AutoCAD drawing by Michael Moran.

Figure 3: Harness Measuring Points on the Dog

Points A to B on Figure of Harness
Measure the circumference of the dog's body behind the front legs. On a horse, this is the girth measurement. A buckle will be added to this section of the harness at point A, so add a few inches to the measurement. Pad the area across the dog's back since this part of the harness carries the weight of the shafts.

Points C to D on Figure of Harness
Measure from one side behind the dog's front leg at the girth, across the front of his chest, to behind the front leg on the other side. The chest strap must be padded so it doesn't chaff the dog. A D-ring is installed at point C on the harness on both sides of the harness. These are the pulling points on the harness and the traces attach here.

Points E to F on Figure of Harness
Measure from the chest strap just below the base of the dog's neck, across the dog and on to the chest strap on his other side. This neck strap keeps the chest strap from falling down.

Measure the diameter of the shafts. Using the strap material, make two loops just large enough to slide freely on the shafts. Install one loop on each side of the harness between points B and C. These loops hold up the shafts. The shafts should be high enough so they don't get in the way of the dog's movement. Ideally the shafts should be about an inch above point C on figure of Harness.

Shafts

The pattern for the wagon shafts (Figure 4) is based on the shafts of a 19th century dog sulky I own. The design has been slightly modified so the shafts can be used to replace the wagon handle. The shafts should be thickest on the horizontal and thinner on the vertical. Shafts need to be strong enough to steer a wagon but should not be heavy. Massive shafts look out of proportion to the dog and add unnecessary weight for the dog to pull. Traditionally, shafts are made of oak or ash. Do not use plywood to make your shafts.

The primary function of shafts is for the draft animal to STEER the vehicle. If you use long traces with your wagon (four wheels), steering the wagon is the main function of the shafts, and braking is the secondary function. See the breeching in the harness section of this article. Thus, there is no need to make heavy shafts. On the wagon shaft plans (figure 4), the function of the bent wood half circle is to stiffen the shafts in the horizontal direction for steering.

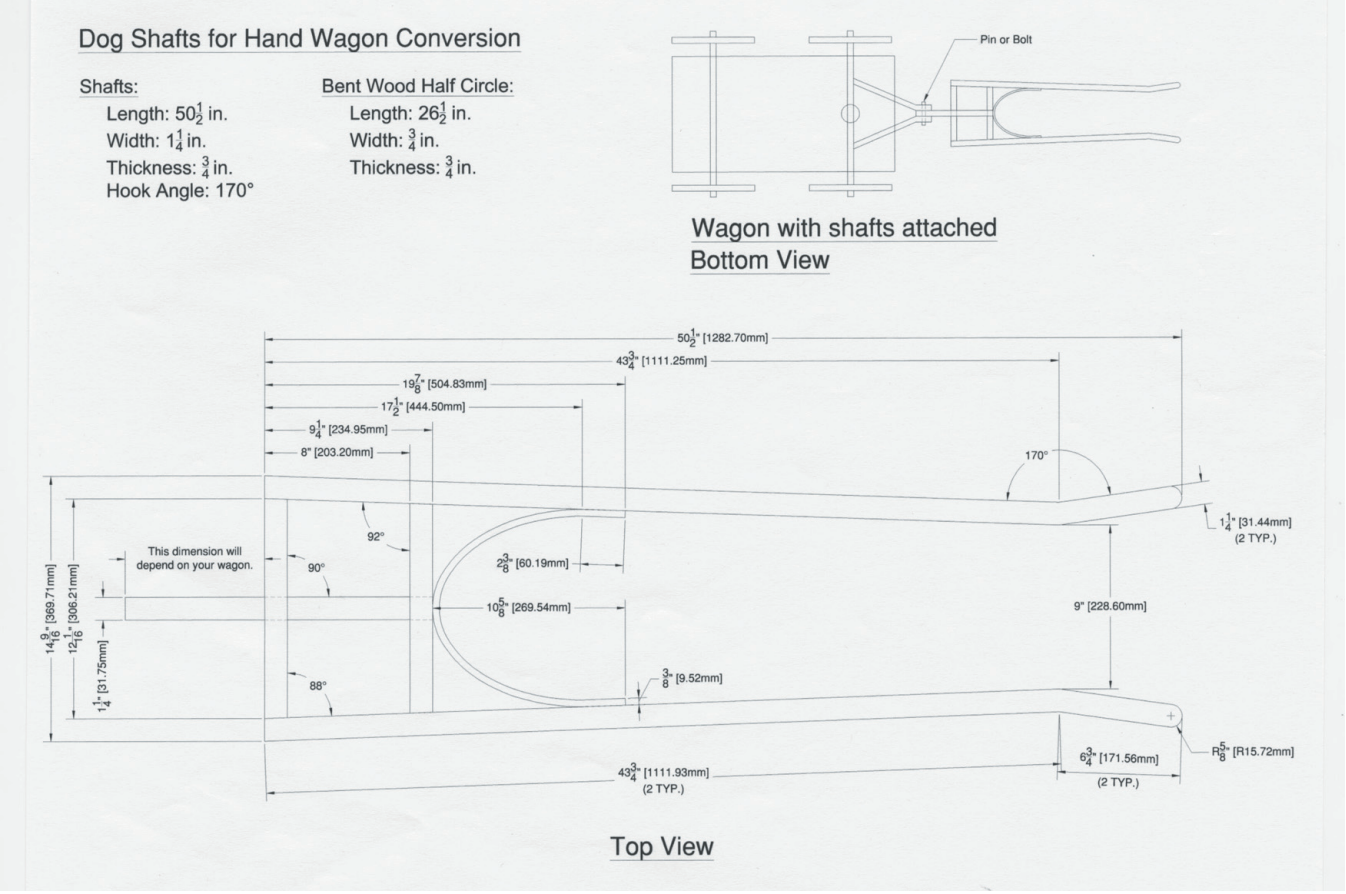


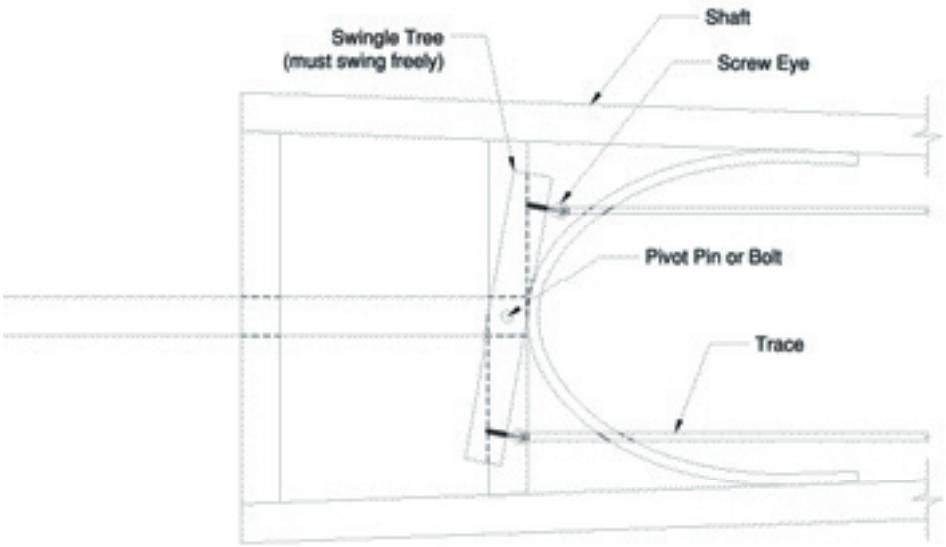
Figure 4: AutoCAD drawing by Michael Moran. The shafts are patterned after an existing 19th century dog sulky.

With carts (two wheels), another function of the shafts is for the draft animal to balance the cart. The cargo in a cart should be distributed so that the two wheels and axle primarily support the weight of the cargo. A small draft animal such as a dog, should have very, very little weight supported on its back. In fact, a horse, goat, or dog can pull more effectively if the cart just slightly lifts the dog. Modern horse racing sulkies are designed to take advantage of this fact. On a cart, shafts also work as primitive springs. They should be thin enough in the vertical cross section direction so they can flex slightly and help cushion the dog's back from the jostling of the cart over bumpy terrain. The horizontal cross section of the shafts should be thicker than the vertical cross section. Thus, the shafts will be stiff in this direction for steering.

The dimensions given in figure 4 are to make wagon shafts that will fit most 50 to 80 pound dogs. Figure 6 shows how to adjust the shaft dimensions to fit any size dog.

A long metal pin attaches the wagon handle to the ladder wagon. Remove the pin and handle from the wagon. Drill a hole large enough for the pin in the end of the pole that extends from between the shafts. Install the shafts in place of the wagon handle and attach the shafts with the pin. See the inset picture in the figure 4. The wagon conversion is almost complete.

The two traces need an attachment point to the dog wagon. There are two ways to attach the traces. The simplest manner is to install two screw eyes to one of the cross bars between the shafts. The eye screws are screwed on each end of the cross bar near the shafts. The other method is to attach the traces to a swingle tree (or whipple tree) and to attach the swingle tree between the shafts and the cross-bars. See figures 5 and 2. A swingle tree is a bar that is as slightly wider than the dog and has attachment points for the traces at each end. The center of the swingle tree has a hole dilled in it for a bolt. The swingle tree is attached to the center of the front cross bar, such that the swingle tree can pivot around its center without hitting the shafts or the crossbar. As the dog swings his front leg forward, one side of the dog's chest pushes forward, and so on. The swingle tree translates the side-to-side pull of the dog's shoulders to pulling the center of the wagon. In addition, a swingle tree makes pulling more comfortable for the dog.



Optional Swingle Tree Assembly - bottom view

Figure 5: Swingle Tree (or Whipple Tree). AutoCAD drawing by Michael Moran.

Figure 6: How to Measure Your Dog for Shafts

A to C: Distance from chest to back of rear leg under base of tail.
B to C: Distance from front of chest to behind the shoulder blade and under the withers.
B(left) to B(right): Width of dog behind the neck and under the withers.
B to D: Shaft Height from Ground. On a cart, the shafts should be level to the ground.
E to A: Distance greater than half the distance from B to D. This space is for kick room of the rear legs. If the shafts are used on a wagon, this distance may need to be greater.
E: Front of cart body should not extend beyond this point
F: Back of cart body

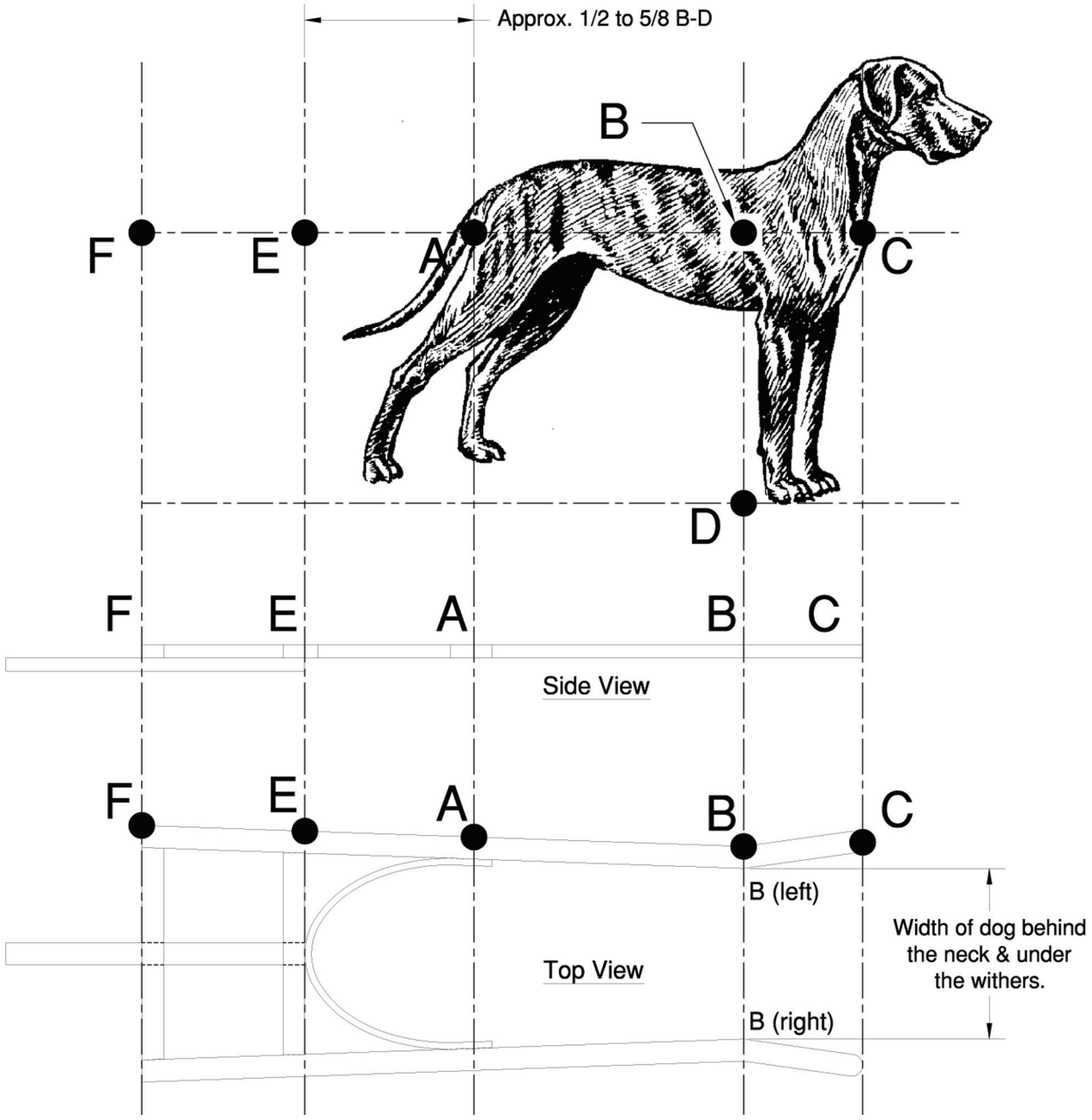


Figure 6: Shaft Measurement Points. AutoCAD drawing by Michael Moran.

Conclusion

Several years ago, I started taking my dog and my dog carts to local events. I liked not having to carry my water, folding chair, and etc. around events. I found in the SCA, adults like the idea of putting their big dog to work and of adding a little ambience to their persona, camp, and event. Children like the idea of playing "horse" with a dog. Vixen loves the attention and being petted. Converting a small hand wagon into a dog wagon and training a dog is not hard. If you are interested in dog carting, I encourage you to give it a try.

End Notes:

1. Dame Juliana Berners (Barnes or Bernes), Boke of St. Albans. 1486.

2. A. Laby, 'Useful Dogs in Holland,' The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News, February 26, 1876, Page 525.

3. Marjorie Rowling, Every Day Life of Travellers, 1989. Page 15. Published by Dorset Press. ISBN: 0.88029.351.9

4. Katherine MacDonogh, Reigning Cats and Dogs, 1999, Page 8. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York. ISBN: 0.312.22837.6

5. Katherine MacDonogh, Reigning Cats and Dogs, 1999, Page 10. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York. ISBN: 0.312.22837.6

6. Stuart Piggott, Wagon, Chariot, and Carriage; Symbol and Status in the History of Transport, 1992. Page 152. Published by Thames and Hudson, New York. ISBN: 0.500.25114.2

7. James Grout, Circus Maximus, 2003. http://itsa.ucsf.edu/~snlrc/encyclopaedia_romana/circusmaximus/circusmaximus.html

8. Rebecca Morris, 'This Job's Gone to the Dogs!' The Carriage Journal, Vol. 42, No. 1, January 2004. Pages 16, 17, and 29. ISSN: 0008.6916

9. Mary E. Thurston, "Canine Emancipation", Dog World, March, 1996, pp. 36-42.

Additional Suggested Reading

Vivian Ellis, Richard Ellis, and Joy Claxton, Make the Most of Carriage Driving, 1995. Published by J. A. Allen & Company Limited, London. ISBN: 0.85131.602.6

M. A. Littauer and J. H. Crouwel, Wheeled Vehicles and Ridden Animals in the Ancient Near East, 1979. Published by E. J. Brill. ISBN: 90.04.05953.9

Dr. Johannes Caius, Of English Dogs (Of Englishe Dogges), English translation originally published in 1576. (It was originally written in Latin by John Keys in 1570.) Facsimile reprinted in 1993 by Beech Publishing House, West Sussex, England. (pages 32, 36, 37)
ISBN: 1 85736 070 2

Dr. Gordon S. Cantle, A Collection of Essays on Horse-Drawn Carriages and Carriage Parts, 1993. Published by the Carriage Museum of America, Inc. Printed by Image Print York, Ltd., 219a Malton Road, York YO3 9TD, England. No ISBN number.

Rebecca Morris, History of Dog Carts, 2003. http://hometown.aol.com/vixensmistress/page1.html

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J. Spruytte, Early Harness Systems, 1983, London: J. A. Allen & Co. ISBN: 0851313760

John Thompson, Making Model Horse Drawn Vehicles, 3rd Edition. Published by Charterlith, 1994, Hampshire, U.K. ISBN: 0.9505775.0.2

Dr. Judith A. Weller. Roman Traction Systems, 1999
http://www.humanist.de/rome/rts/index.htm

Sources for Pre-Made Carting items

Ladder Style Hand Wagons
eBay
http://www.ebay.com
Blue Boar Antiques
www.blueboar.com

Ladder Wagons already converted into dog wagons
WILCZEK WOODWORKS
http://www.wilczekwoodworks.com
1786 Broomstick Hill Road
Littleton, NH 03561
603-444-0824

Dog Breast Harness for Carting
Drivers A La Cart
http://www.driversalacart.com
Ikon Outfitters
http://www.ikonoutfitters.com

Roman Chariot Style, Dorsal Hitch Harness for Dogs
http://hometown.aol.com/tzlites/tzlitesp1.html

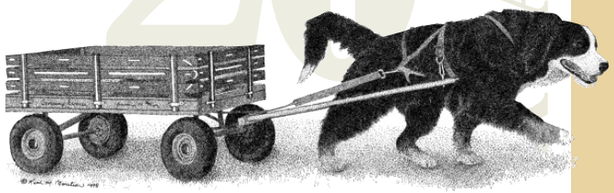
Wood Spoke Wheels
Any carriage shop or wheelwright catering to the Amish and Mennonite communities is a good source for well constructed wood spoke wheels with either metal or hard rubber tires. They can be ordered in any diameter you want. Be kind to your dog and order wheels with cone or ball bearings. The bearings are hidden in the wood hubs. In 2004, new wood spoke wheels cost from $80 to $100 each.
I use Witmer Coach Shop
1070 West Main Street
New Holland, PA 17557
(717) 656-3411

Biography

Lady Rachel of Bhakail is the poorly educated daughter of an English pilgrim. She doesn't know what year it is. "To whose calendar are you referring?" Rachel lives as a traveling performer and by her wits. She uses a dog cart to travel. The game warden believes her draft dog is really a lurcher and thinks her hedgehog stew tastes suspiciously like rabbit stew.

Rebecca Morris lives in Philadelphia with her Golden Retriever cross Chow Chow mix dog, Vixen. She is a Test Engineer who tests batteries for space and military applications. She has yet to meet the Energizer Bunny. Rebecca collects antique dog carts and exercises her dog using a 19th century dog sulky. She thanks all who share their garb research and patterns.

20 YEARS BMDCA DRAFT



On September 22, 1991, at the Middlesex County 4-H Fairgrounds in Westford, Massachusetts, the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Joined the Ranks of Other National Clubs in Sponsoring and Promoting Tests Which Spotlight the Original Purpose of Their Breed

Seven Bernese Mountain Dogs stepped into history when they earned the first-ever Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America Novice Draft Dog (NDD) titles:

Bluesky Matt Dillon V Summit CDX and Kathy Heun

Liskarn America Bound Jerry and Alison Jaskiewicz

Lupine's Little Tugboat CD and Chris Cottle

Ch Nordstaaten's Emma CDX and Ruth Ballmer

Olympians Helen of Troy CD and Lisa Allen

Ch Sandusky's Promises Promises CD and Beth Zipsie

Sudan Neuchatel V Halidom CD and Sue Sanvido

"The seven teams that passed did an excellent job. It was a tribute to our breed to see such reliable and happy performances. The youngest dog to pass was 2½ years old, and the oldest was 9½."
—Judge Beverly Barney

The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley worked as a team to create an inaugural event the US Berner community would be proud of. There was outstanding support for the first-ever BMDCA Draft Test: twelve exhibitors represented five of the New England states, Quebec, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Colorado. The 90 x 90 foot ring was decorated with swiss flags, red and white chrysanthemums, and milk cans. The cart park along one side of the ring was defined by life-size plywood berner cutouts, perfectly marked, of course, at each end. An intriguing variety of carts was neatly lined up and ready for the test.

Judges were Beverly Barney from New Hampshire and Mary Alice Eschweiler from Wisconsin. Test Secretary was Elaine Golden. Eight stewards assured a ring that ran like clockwork, while 150 spectators were on hand to watch, enjoy, cheer and revel in the fact that Berners were back at work in America!

Both judges were members of the original 1979 Draft Test Committee, and their participation completed the circle of events which led to this first BMDCA Draft Test. With more than thirty years of carting between them, Bev and Mary Alice brought depth of knowledge as well as years of experience with Bernese into the ring. They took their responsibility seriously and established a high standard of judging and performance, while setting the exhibitors at ease.

The award ceremony crowned a perfect fall day. All twelve teams, harnessed and hitched, were invited into the ring to the applause of the spectators. Each exhibitor received a glass mug engraved *First BMDCA Draft Test*. Passing teams were called out one at a time and rosettes were attached to the dog's harnesses. A single circuit of the ring by all the teams brought this very special day to a close.

The BMDCA Draft Test "gives our breed the opportunity to retain the heritage of the Berner Sennenhund of Switzerland. It is a realistic test of working conditions that is attainable by most Bernese Mountain Dogs with proper training and equipment."
—Judge Beverly Barney

September 22, 1991: Berners wait patiently during the group-stay, hitched to a wonderful variety of carts. The dogs could be left standing, sitting, or lying down at the handler's discretion. This exercise is still part of the current draft test. Any exhibitor will tell you this is the longest three minutes in the world. Photo: Tom Jaskiewicz.

Development of the BMDCA Draft Test Regulations

In June 1979 the BMDCA Board of Directors asked Beverly Barney to form a committee to explore and formulate standards for a draft test. The same year the Newfoundland Club of America (NCA) began a similar project, contacted the BMDCA, and proposed a cooperative effort. Development proceeded separately with the hope of future joint tests. This was not meant to be.

Twice, in 1982 and 1984, the BMDCA submitted the proposed regulations to the regional clubs for comments and suggestions; and approved draft work matches to evaluate and improve the regulations. No action was taken and the regulations remained in limbo for several years with few people aware of their existence. The NCA approved draft tests in 1984.

In the summer of 1988, the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley (BMDCNV) decided the time had come for Berners to be able to earn titles reflecting their working heritage. Sunday, October 22, 1989 was chosen for hosting the first BMD Draft Match in Medfield, Massachusetts using the 1979 BMDCA Draft Test Regulations. The entry of three was a disappointment but the turnout of over seventy spectators from at least eight states buoyed spirits. Berner owners wanted to learn more about draft work! The performances of all three teams were greeted with enthusiasm although only one team passed the test. Evaluation forms were included with the catalogs and provided valuable feedback. Many people requested an on-leash class comparable to the AKC Novice Obedience class. (The 1979 regulations had only one class conducted entirely off-leash, not a realistic goal for Berner owners just learning about draft work.) Others thought the formality of the test exercises did not reflect everyday working conditions.

The BMDCNV submitted a match report to the BMDCA with recommended changes to the regulations and requested the re-establishment of the Draft Work Committee to pursue the development of a draft performance event. The board acted on this request in May 1990, appointing Nashoba's Paul Emerson to chair the committee.

The BMDCA Draft Committee revised the regulations based on the comments of the exhibitors, spectators, and judges, and scheduled a second Draft Match on Sunday, September 23, 1990 in Westford, Massachusetts. The new regulations offered two classes, one mostly on-leash and the other entirely off-leash. Some exercises were modified and a new one was added—all this with spectators, as well as exhibitors in mind.

Entries totalled seven for the second match, five in Novice Draft and two in Open Draft, from seven states! The exercises were streamlined for both spectator appeal and smoother ring performances; multiple commands, signals and praise were allowed in most exercises; and scoresheets were given to the exhibitors at the conclusion of judging. Three dogs passed the Novice class and both Open Draft dogs passed.

The second match was as much a learning experience as the first and the Draft Committee met again to make relatively minor changes and clarification of the regulations. A complete package of Draft Test Regulations was submitted to the BMDCA in December 1990. Approval came promptly in January 1991.

The exercises in both classes are designed to demonstrate willingness and control while the team executes a series of maneuvers while pulling a draft rig which may be a cart, wagon, sled, toboggan or travois. There are both individual and group exercises.

These draft regulations represent the work of many people over more than a decade. Thanks are due especially to the original 1979 Draft Committee and to the Draft Committee members of the BMDCNV for their commitment to the working heritage of our special breed.

This article was originally prepared by Alison Jaskiewiecz for the AKC Gazette Breed column, and has been edited and reprinted with permission.

Reflections On the Early Draft Test Equipment:

"In the beginning most carts were home-made, adapted garden carts, sulky carts and Radio Flyer wagons. It was amazing how many dogs did pass pulling the noisy Radio Flyers with their little wheels and tendency to jack-knife and flip over. After a couple years—particularly in Novice—all the carts tended to look the same."

"Harnesses ranged from homemade carting harnesses to sled-dog, to modified goat harnesses."

The spring scale: "Using a spring scale was an attempt to factor in the drag weight of the cart. We then factored in the dog's weight to determine how much weight should be added in the cart. This was a good idea on paper that never worked out in the real world. We needed a level space and lots of weight on hand (usually bags of dog food). In some cases we were loading 60, 70, 80 lbs in carts. Later on we went to the 20 lbs for Novice and the weight of dog for Open. The spring scale was gleefully retired."

—Paul Emerson

Draft Tests hosted by the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Nashoba Valley

Year	Judges	Chair(s)
1991	Bev Barney/Mary Alice Eschweiler	Alison Jaskiewicz
1992	David Denis/Paul Emerson	Alison Jaskiewicz
1993	Alison Jaskiewicz/Sue Sanvido	Chris Cottle
1994	Elizabeth Bradley/Paul Emerson	Chris Cottle
1995	Chris Cottle/Chris Mann	Paul Emerson
1996	Alison Jaskiewicz/Eden Jonas	Beth Atkinson
1997	Chris Cottle/Paul Emerson	Ellen Nott & Martha Phelps
1998	*National Specialty*	
	Paul Emerson/Mary Alice Eschweiler	Chris Cottle
1998	*National Specialty*	
	David Denis/Mary Richards	Chris Cottle
1998	Bev Barney/Phil Atkinson	Nisha Coons
1999	Bev Barney/Phil Atkinson	Paul Emerson
2000	Barb Gibson/Sara Steele	Linda Bates
2001	Paul Emerson/Sherrie Start	Marjorie Cottle
2002	Alison Jaskiewicz/Phil Atkinson	Jon Cons
2003	Barbara Gibson/Val Horney	Elizabeth Malcolmson
2004	*Spring*	
	Sara Steele/Paul Emerson	Marjorie Cottle
2004	*Fall*	
	Sue Sanvido/Barb Gibson	Jon Cons
2005	Sherrie Start/Peggy Granger	Margot Burwood
2006	Paul Emerson/Eden Jonas	Jon Cons
2007	Chris Mann/Sara Steele	Margot Burwood
2008	*National Specialty*	
	Val Horney/Linda Thomas	Sue Nowak
2008	*National Specialty*	
	Jennifer Brightbill/Chris Cottle	Sue Nowak
2008	Phil Atkinson/Ruth Nielsen	Alison Jaskiewicz
2008	Paul Emerson/Ruth Nielsen	Alison Jaskiewicz
2009	Barbara Gibson/Steve Likevich	Margot Burwood
2009	Sara Steele/Steve Likevich	Margot Burwood
2010	Chris Cottle/Steve Dudley	Marjorie Cottle
2010	Paul Emerson/Steve Dudley	Marjorie Cottle
2011	Patti Davieau/Phil Atkinson	Elizabeth Malcolmson
2011	Patti Davieau/Barbara Gibson	Elizabeth Malcolmson

Dairy Drafting Dogs

Bernese Mountain Dogs help pull an old tradition toward the millennium

Story and photos by Dr. Bernd Günter

Most of the time Kitty v. Breitenhof, age 7, and her daughter Cora v. Vielbringen, age 5, display typical Bernese Mountain Dog demeanor - calm, laid-back, a little lazy. It's a natural approach to life on a small farm in Switzerland, especially if you're a dog.

Early every morning, however, just as the sun is rising over the hills, they turn into big, vibrant bundles of energy. It's time to milk the cows, and that means Kitty and Cora will soon be pulling a cart loaded with milk cans to the dairy. Lest you think this puts a crimp in their easygoing existence, make no mistake - this is a task they love. Filled with anticipation, they circle the custom-made wood and aluminum milk wagon, waiting to be harnessed.

While the carting tradition is maintained by dedicated Bernese fanciers in many countries mainly as a sport or a nostalgic tribute, in Switzerland, in a few small villages, carting is still a part of everyday life.

The Bernese Mountain Dog's robust physical constitution combines with a remarkable intelligence and a good-natured disposition to create a dog eminently suited to carting. It was developed over several centuries in the Berne region as a multi-purpose working dog. Long before the breed acquired its original Swiss name *Berner Sennenhund* at the beginning of this century, farmers, alpine herders, butchers, weavers and peddlers used these dogs as versatile helpers. They were loyal companions that also guarded property, herded and drove livestock, and, of course pulled loads on little carts or wagons.

By the time the milking starts, Kitty and Cora are so excited that their normally deep bark has turned into a high, almost hysterical yapping. They run back and forth between the cart and the stable, bushy tails wagging as they watch the four 50-liter milk cans beside the cart being filled bucket by bucket. The topped-off cans and cart combine for a total gross weight of 250 kilograms (550 pounds), an impressive load for Kitty and Cora, who tip the scales at just over 40 kilograms (89 pounds) each.

At last the cart is loaded and the cans are secured with a rope. The dogs have an eager, demanding look in their eyes as the farmer's wife approaches. When the center shaft is lifted, Kitty and Cora need no signal; they run to their accustomed places and slip into their brass-ornamented leather harnesses. Though they wait obediently, they are obviously impatient for the straps to be pulled tight and the buckles to be fastened.

Some might wonder why the family bothers with all this, especially when they own a truck that would save them a considerable amount of time and work. But working the dogs keeps alive a long-standing tradition that is in danger of dying out. And they get so much more pleasure and satisfaction in working with genuine partners rather than an inanimate motorized vehicle.

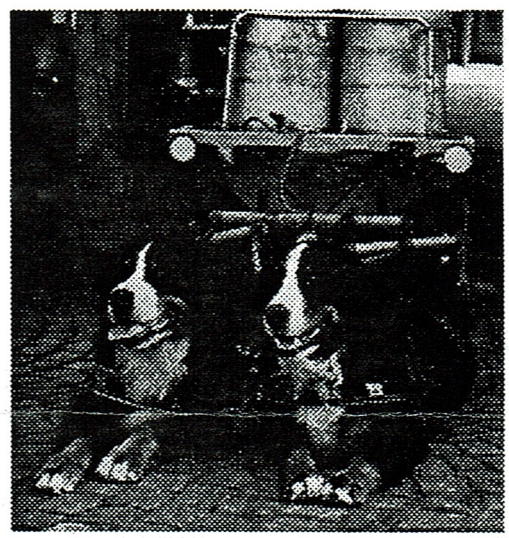
All preparations completed, the farmer's wife picks up the lead connected to the back straps of both harnesses. Ready, steady . . . at the sound of the familiar signal words, Kitty and Cora brace themselves against the felt-lined chest bands and off they go. Across the farmyard, around the corner of the house, onto the street, across an intersection, on toward the dairy. The two dogs know their way so well, they could easily make the trip on their own. Their escort's function is reduced to watching out for traffic.

With remarkable ease and speed and with obvious joy, Kitty and Cora pull their cart through the village streets. They are such a familiar sight that the villagers hardly take notice. After rounding a final bend and negotiating a short, rather steep grade, they pull up in front of the creamery. While the milk is being pumped out of the cans, the two drafters are enjoying a well-deserved break, idly watching pedestrians, cyclists and cars pass by.

Then it's a downhill run back to the farm, where they are released from their harnesses, praised lavishly and given a treat. The remainder of the day is spent in a more sedate fashion; eating, playing, drowsing and watching out for the occasional visitor. But at 6 P.M., the frenzy begins to build again: it's time for the second milking, and the evening shift for Kitty and Cora.

A Cartful of Honors for Kitty and Cora

In addition to their admirable daily work performance, Kitty and Cora have other achievements to boast about. Both passed the demanding breeding assessment of the Swiss Bernese Mountain Dog Club (conformation and temperament) with honors. Kitty has given birth to several litters of beautiful and sound puppies. Cora is a certified *Schutzhund* and *Sanitatshund* (ambulance dog). And it comes as no surprise that on more than one occasion the two have earned red ribbons at carting competitions, leaving all other contestants behind.



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If you can find a copy of the December 1995 AKC Gazette the full color Berner photos are well worth it.

DRAFTING AND DRIVING ARE FUN AND USEFUL

BY LIZ PALIKA

LAST WEEK, BY THE TIME I FINISHED SOME NECESSARY SHOPping, the back of my pickup truck was full. I had a 25-pound bag of cat litter, a 40-pound bag of dog food, two bags of potting soil, two big bags of bark for the garden and several bags of groceries.

After I returned home, I decided to share the work ahead. Calling Ursa, my 8-year-old Australian Shepherd, to me, I settled her into her wagon and led her to the truck. With her help, it took four trips to unload the truck and distribute the stuff, whereas alone it would have taken me twice the trips and time.

DRAFTING VERSUS DRIVING

The term *drafting* is used when a dog pulls a wagon with weight in it while the owner walks with the dog. *Driving* is when a dog pulls a wagon or cart in which the owner is riding. Some of the same basic skills are needed for both activities, but the weight load is proportioned to each dog's size, skills and abilities. A dog pulling its owner must be able to pull that amount of weight and must be able to take commands from a person riding behind.

Many large-breed dogs were used as draft animals at some point during their histories. The ancestors of Rottweilers pulled heavy wagons for the Roman armies. Saint Bernards, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs and many other breeds were used extensively as draft animals, pulling loads of produce, milk or cheese to market. Today, many different breeds can be seen pulling wagons in parades, fun events and competitions, as well as on the farm, at work or at home.

PHOTOS BY LIZ PALIKA

Dog carts can be easily made using a child's wagon, plastic plumbing pipe, rope, and a nylon or leather harness.

IS YOUR DOG READY FOR THE WAGON?

If this sounds interesting to you, don't go out and buy a wagon just yet. If the wagon and load are in proportion to the dog, just about any dog can do draft work, but there are some things you need to evaluate first. As you look at the guidelines below, try to be impartial. Decide realistically whether your dog might be able to participate in this activity.

1. Does your dog have a stable, steady personality? Is your dog willing to do what you want it to? Is your dog well-socialized to other people, other dogs and to the world around it? Would your dog panic at a wagon bouncing and rattling behind it? Would your dog spook if the driver of a car honked the horn right behind it? These things can be a problem for some dogs.

If you are going to take your dog out in public with a wagon, your dog must be able to concentrate on the job at hand and ignore other dogs, kids playing, cars whizzing by and birds flying overhead. Obviously, some of this can be controlled with training, but much of it depends on the dog's personality.

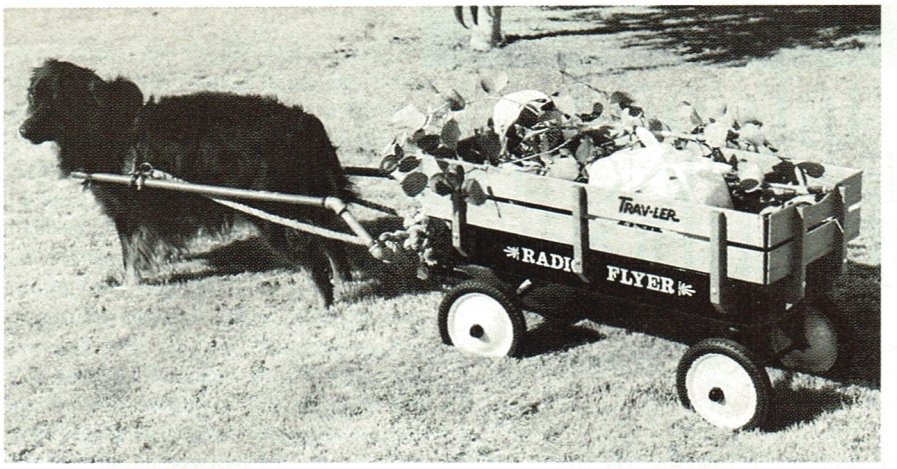
2. How much training has your dog had? You will have to do some specialized training for this work, which we will talk about later, but if your dog has had some basic obedience training, its draft work will be much better. Your dog must be reliable on the basic commands, especially stay and heel. An understanding of stand/stay is good, too. Obedience training teaches you how to train your dog, accustoms your dog to learning new things, and helps you establish control.

3. How is your dog's health? Physically, your dog must be healthy, sound and strong enough to pull the wagon and any weight you pile in it. If you have any doubts about your dog's physical health, talk to your veterinarian.

EQUIPMENT

Carts and wagons. Carts and wagons come in a variety of styles and sizes. I use a little red wagon from the toy store. I take the handle off and use plastic plumbing pipe to make a U-shaped hookup from the wagon to the dog.

However, there are professionally made wagons for dogs that might suit your purpose. Some look like tiny Conestoga wagons while others look more like sulkies for horses. Some



If you aren't interested in competition but want to give your dog work to do, drafting can come in handy for yard work.

Several breed clubs offer draft dog competitions and titles. The Newfoundland Club of America was one of the first clubs in the United States to offer guidelines for draft dog titles and competitions. The club also has training guidelines and information about different styles of wagons and carts; the club even offers plans on how owners can build their own carts. The Saint Bernard Club of America and the Bernese Mountain Dog Club also offer draft dog competitions.

are wooden and heavy; others are aluminum and light enough to lift onto a car's bicycle rack.

The style you choose to use depends on many things. How heavy can it be? How much weight do you want your dog to pull? How will you transport the wagon? Do you need to lift it into your car or van or onto a bike rack? Do you need to dismantle it for transport?

Do you want a cart that you can ride in, or do you want to haul stuff in the wagon? If you want your dog to pull the wagon off the road or sidewalk, you will want one with appropriate tires—slightly wider, inflatable tires—rather than regular wagon tires that can make pulling more difficult.

Harnesses. It is difficult to make a strong, comfortable, well-fitting harness unless you are an experienced harness maker, so you are better off buying one.

There are several different harness styles. A buckle-type harness has a wide, padded strap that goes across the front of the dog's chest and another that goes around the rib cage behind the front legs. When properly fitted, the chest strap should be placed high enough so that it doesn't interfere with the dog's front leg movement, yet low enough so that the dog is not pulling with its neck. The strap around the rib cage should be snug enough to keep the harness in place, yet loose enough so that the dog can expand its chest and breathe deeply.

A siwash harness is formed by two straps that cross over the front of the dog's chest and again over the back and under the belly. It should be fitted so that there are no gaps or loose spots.

Other harnesses are variations of one of the previously mentioned styles; some are made for a specific type of cart or are made for a specific purpose. Some draft dog owners or sled dog trainers have come out with different types of harnesses.

Harnesses are usually made of nylon straps or leather. Leather will stretch slightly under pressure, which can be more comfortable for your dog. However, leather requires more upkeep. Saddle soap or a similar preparation must be used regularly to keep the leather in condition, especially after it has gotten wet. Nylon wears well, comes in a variety of colors and doesn't require the upkeep of leather, but it doesn't have that natural give.

No matter what style of harness you use, make sure it fits properly. It is important that the harness fits your dog properly, is comfortable and safe, and works with your wagon. Without a good harness, your cart is useless.

DRAFTING AND DRIVING II: HOOKING UP AND PULLING

BY LIZ PALIKA

LAST MONTH IN THIS COLUMN, WE DISCUSSED THE ACTIVITY OF drafting and driving. We also talked about what carts or wagons are available and what harnesses you might wish to use. This month, let's discuss introducing your dog to a harness and wagon.

HELLO, HARNESS

Some dogs will accept a harness with casual interest while others may be uncertain about wearing one. The key is to introduce the harness slowly to make sure your dog accepts one.

Let your dog smell the harness. Say, "Oh, look! What's this?" in an excited tone. Once the dog has satisfied its curiosity, touch the dog with the harness. With treats in your right hand, hold the harness up with your left hand, and make the dog poke its head through the harness opening to get the treat. Then praise the dog enthusiastically. When the dog does this with no problem, offer another treat and let the harness slip down to the dog's shoulders.

Now pull the harness over the body, adjust the dog's front legs, and fasten the harness into place. Offer another treat, and praise the dog for accepting all this manipulation.

With the harness on the dog, practice some obedience commands. This helps the dog become accustomed to the weight, pressure and feel of the harness. If the dog reacts uncomfortably or tries to scratch or chew at a particular spot, adjust the harness. To accustom your dog further, let it wear the harness while it eats a meal or wanders around the living room in the evening.

Harness Tip

If your dog reacts to harness introduction with fear, restrain it slightly so that it doesn't panic, and at the same time say, "Wow! What's that?" Don't try to reassure the dog with, "That's okay sweetie. Don't worry." If you do this, the dog may think that it is being praised for its fearful reaction.

LEARNING TO PULL WEIGHT

Once your dog is used to the harness, teach it to pull weight. Fasten a long leash (10 to 15 feet) to the harness, and tie the other end to an appropriately sized piece of wood. There should be enough weight that the dog feels the pull, but it should not be so heavy that the dog doesn't try or cannot succeed. (For example, a Papillon could start with a piece of kindling, an Australian Shepherd could start with a 4- to 6-inch-diameter log and a Newfoundland could start with a bigger log.)

Once the log is fastened to the dog's harness, back away from your dog, and encourage it to follow you. "Let's go! Pull! Good boy!" When the dog follows you easily, turn so that it heels by your side while still dragging the log. Continue to encourage the dog.

MORE PULLING COMMANDS

Once your dog is comfortable dragging a small log, add variety to the heel command. Turn corners, and as you do so, tell your dog "Left" or "Right" as you turn. Walk slow or fast, and give your dog the appropriate command. Tell your dog to "Halt" or "Stop" as you come to a stop. Then tell your dog to stand and stay instead of sit. These are commands you will need once the dog is pulling the wagon.

While your dog pulls the log, encourage it to pull ahead of you rather than heel. If you are going to ride in the wagon, your dog needs to be able to take com-

PHOTOS BY LIZ PALIKA

This Australian Shepherd learns to accept a harness and pull a log.

Brew, a mixed breed, is introduced to a sulky.

mands from you when you are behind it. The same applies when you walk with the wagon instead of next to your dog. Instead of telling your dog to heel when you start walking, say, "Let's go!" or "Pull!" When your dog moves ahead, praise it.

DOG AND WAGON MEET

Don't rush the introduction to the wagon—this will determine how your dog will feel about this new activity. Let your dog check the wagon out as you say, "Oh, what's this? Wow!" in an excited tone. Pop a treat in your dog's mouth, spin the wheels, and move the wagon. Let it sit in the living room for a day or two while your dog gets used to it.

Take the wagon out to the backyard. Let your dog run free in the yard while you pull the wagon around. Make it bounce and rattle as it will when your dog pulls it. Every once in a while, offer your dog a treat and talk to it in an excited tone. When your dog seems to accept the wagon, take the dog and wagon out for a walk. Leash your dog and keep it on your left side, holding the leash in your left hand. Keep the wagon on your right so that you can pull it with your right hand. As you start walking, do not tell your dog to heel. Let your dog turn to look at the wagon. Go over curbs, bounce the wagon, turn corners, and walk at different speeds. Walk over grass, on dirt, gravel, concrete and asphalt. Prepare your dog for any noises the wagon will make and for any surfaces on which it will have to pull.

READY, SET, PULL

Your dog should be ready to hook up to the wagon if all has gone smoothly up to this point. Have your dog stand between the wagon shafts. Hook the harness up to the shafts as you talk to your dog, "Hey, this is pretty neat!" Then, with the leash attached to the dog's collar, encourage it to take a step. If it fights the harness and wagon, stop it and say, "Hey! Stop! Stand!" If you have done the initial training, your dog should settle down quickly. When your dog is calm again, take another step. However, if the dog continues to panic, unhook the wagon and repeat the steps that familiarize the dog with the wagon.

Once your dog is walking a few steps, move forward a little faster, encouraging the dog continually, and use the new direction commands. Tell your dog "Right" or "Left" as you turn. You will need to help the dog turn in the beginning because the wagon's shafts are rigid, and the dog will need to make much wider turns. Also practice the "Slow" or "Fast" or "Stop" commands.

Have your dog pull the wagon over potholes, up curbs and down curbs, and around fire hydrants and stop signs. Repeat these exercises until pulling a wagon is ordinary stuff to your dog.

Once your dog is progressing, offer some neighborhood kids a ride. They will love it! Or gradually add some weight. Let your dog build some muscles, though, before you add too much.

DRAFTING AND DRIVING PART III: HOW TO EARN TITLES

BY LIZ PALIKA

NOW THAT YOU KNOW WHETHER YOUR DOG IS A GOOD CANdidate for this activity and have learned about the equipment and training skills needed, you may wish to enter your dog in competition to earn titles, such as the Novice Draft Dog (NDD) and Draft Dog (DD) titles offered by the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America. Owners of Newfoundlands, Saint Bernards and Bernese Mountain Dogs may turn to their breed clubs for rules and regulations (see boxed story), but opportunities are available for other breeds as well. For instance, some regional clubs permit all breeds to participate in draft dog competitions, although rules vary from group to group.

Following is an overview of the most common exercises required in draft dog competitions:

Basic Control—Dog must heel on leash in the novice class, off leash in the senior, or open, class; and come when called. These exercises demonstrate the handler's control of the dog.

Harness and Hitch—Dog must demonstrate willingness to be harnessed and hitched to the wagon, showing no resistance.

Practical Draft Work—Dog must pull wagon in a variety of situations that might be faced in daily draft work: maneuvering the wagon between obstacles and over different surfaces; changing directions upon owner's command; changing pace at owner's command; and ignoring distractions.

Loading and Unloading—Dog must remain in position while owner loads and unloads wagon.

Maneuvering—Dog must pull wagon in a circular pattern to the right and left and make 90-degree turns left and right; pull the wagon through a narrow area only 12 inches wider than the wagon; and stay in position while the owner removes an obstacle from the dog's path.

Stay—While hitched to the wagon in either a stand, down or sit position, the dog must complete a three-minute stay command.

Distance Freight Haul—Dog and owner must traverse an outdoor cross-country course with weight in the wagon. Novice

Equipment Vendors

Adanac Sleds and Equipment, (406) 752-2929
Black Ice Dog Sledding, (612) 955-2505
Ikon Outfitters, (608) 592-4397
K-9 Sulkies, (714) 621-7511
Kondos Outfitter, (218) 365-4189
Resha Sled Dog Equipment, (814) 362-3048
Rustic Outdoor Supplies, (705) 721-1513
Paul Talalay, (310) 318-5819
Von Russ Giants, (717) 288-0735

dogs pull 20 pounds, while senior, or open, dogs pull their own weight. This half-mile course usually includes uphill and downhill stretches, gullies and other changes in terrain.

TRAINING WRAP UP

To compete successfully, always keep safety in mind. Before entering a competition, be sure your dog understands each exercise thoroughly. A poorly trained dog can panic and hurt itself or others.

Build muscles gradually. Do not ask more of your dog than it is able or willing to give.

When working your dog in public, be observant. A hitched dog is powerless against stray dogs or teasing children, and it is more vulnerable to hot asphalt or slippery concrete.

Above all, have fun. Carting is an enjoyable activity, especially for dogs that love to have a job to perform.

Other Resources

- *An Introduction to Canine Carting* (video). Beth Ostrander. Available from Dog Works Inc., RR 3, Box 317, Curvin Cir., Stewartstown, PA 17363; (800) 787-2788.
- Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America, 221 Greenland Ave., Oconomowoc, WI 53066
- *Carting* (video). Cheryl Dondino. Available from Harmony Enterprises, 20600 S.W. Johnson, Aloha, OR 97006; (503) 591-9187.
- Dog Sledders Resource Guide, Stellar Communications, PO Box 149, Ester, AK 99725
- Newfoundland Club of America, 5208 Olive Road, Raleigh, NC 27606
- *Newfoundland Draft Work*, 2nd ed. Consie Powell. Available from Dog Works Inc.

PULLING YOUR WEIGHT
or an Exhibitor's Responsibility in the Draft Ring.

As the Spring season of BMDCA draft tests approaches, the anxiety of passing a test increases. Here are a few tips to help you get through that important test for which you have been preparing. Many of these items are just common sense; man of them can be applied to conformation, obedience or any other aspect of the regulated sport of dogs. These tips may seem more than obvious to the ring-wise exhibitor but the checklist is worth it if it helps you get that Novice Draft Dog title!

1. **Know the rules and regulations**. The BMDCA Draft Test Regulations may be ordered through BMDCA Ways and Means ($2.00) or may be downloaded from the BMDCA site at www.BMDCA.org. American Kennel Club Obedience Regulations may be purchased for $1.00 from the AKC, 5580 Centerview Dr., Raleigh, NC, 27606-3390, or may be downloaded from www.AKC.org.
2. **Practice beforehand.** This is best done with a friend who can give you objective criticism of your work. If you find yourself struggling with one exercise, break it down into its major components and work on each part individually. Don't keep testing the dog at a failure point. End your practice sessions with success.
3. **Send your entries in on time and completed.** Deadlines are deadlines. Don't expect the secretary of the test to break the rules for you or to read your mind.
4. **Pay attention to your dog.** Fouling in the ring or on the freight haul is a disqualification so be aware of your dogs physical comforts.
5. **Keep your dog under control.** An increasing number of incidents where dogs have shown aggressive behavior towards other dogs are a *large* concern for the drafting community. Do not leave your dogs unattended in exercise pens. Do not allow your dog to wander at the fully extended length of his lead. Do not use flexi-leads unless you are distant from other dogs; they are not very strong and leave you with little control.
6. **Check your equipment ...three times.** Check your equipment before you leave home, before you enter the ring and before the freight haul. Remember especially that you have to be able to secure your load.
7. **Be on time for the equipment check! Check the schedule!** Test hours are starting earlier and earlier to accommodate exhibitors. Test committees and judges are working to get tests started on time and run smoothly. Don't expect to arrive at the last minute for your equipment check. If everyone were to do this, the test would be delayed.
8. **Use all the advantages that are given to you in advance.** Course maps can be studied. Pay attention at the walk-through and visualize yourself with your dog and cart. If you are not the first entrant in the ring, watch the other exhibitors to see how they handle potential problems in the ring. Be aware of what is going on outside of the ring. Visual and audio distractions that are planned are not the only distractions to dogs. For example, you may not want your family members seated at ringside with all your other dogs. If you have questions, ask the judge.
9. **Be on time for your basic draft work!** Be aware of the judging order. It is the handler's responsibility to be at ringside with dog and equipment when it is their turn. And it is okay for the judges to make you wait but it is not okay to make them wait!
10. **Be on time for the group exercise and freight haul!** It's unfair for all the other dogs, handlers, stewards and judges to wait for you to get your equipment ready for the freight haul. As the last dog is being judged, ready yourself for the stay exercise and the freight haul.
11. **Expect variety.** Each judge has a different style. Each ring set-up will differ from the last one. Some judges present complicated rings, others have simple plans. Do you think that at every test the load you will be given will be a blanket? Maybe it will be a large stuffed toy or a bag of groceries. If your cart is a small "competition" cart, are you prepared to take on a large load?
12. **Expect challenge**. If the test is a challenging one, you will be all the more proud of that title. A can-do attitude will get you through the test better than one of fear and terror for your lack of preparation. In general, the dogs do just fine. It's the owner's who get confused and cause the team to fail.

13. **Be aware that you are not alone on the freight haul.** This is a part of the test which many of us cannot simulate at home, walking with a lot of other dogs in a group. The two judges and the stewards do all they can to judge *all* dogs present so it helps to keep together without interfering with each other.
14. **Be a team!** When you enter the ring, remember that are with your best friend, your dog. Work together. Handler errors account for a large number of failures. Most judges are looking for the teamwork between handler and dog as much as they are checking how well you are maneuvering the course. A tight lead will indicate to the judge that the dog is not going where the handler wants the dog to go. A very loose lead with the handler following the dog around the ring indicates that the dog is in charge!
15. **Have fun! It's a sport. Good luck! Happy drafting!**

Mary Alice Eschweiler, Draft Working Committee

These hapless dogs were trained to turn a large butter churn wheel. ("Chatterbox," 1907)

Below: A circa 1900 photo shows a Flemish dog cart pulled by canines of three different coat patterns. Photo from the author's collection.

· CANINE · EMANCIPATION

Lower-class working dogs sacrificed their lives for commerce and combat, and inspired a new humane ethic

BY MARY E. THURSTON

Life in 18th- and 19th-century Europe was hard for almost everyone except a handful of rich aristocratic families with "managed" lineages, who exploited those less fortunate than themselves in the belief that it was their birthright. At least until the mid-1800s a feudal system set in place centuries earlier continued to dictate social and economic status from the moment of birth, with little regard for the aspirations or abilities of individuals. This meant that preindustrial society was sharply divided between the "haves" and "have-nots," with a small elite living off the back-breaking labor of millions of illiterate and unknown peasants, an arrangement that was rarely questioned, at least not in public. If it was widely accepted behavior for the upper class to exploit those who were beneath them, what could be wrong with the lower class doing the same to dogs?

A Belgian policeman issues a citation to a Flemish milk maid as she makes her delivery rounds in this circa 1910 photo. The woman possibly was cited for the ill-fitting muzzle on the dog on the left. Photo from the author's collection.

Just as an abused child is at risk of maturing into an abuser, these oppressed peasants assumed the role of suppressors by creating and perpetuating a class of "slave" canines, forcing them to pull heavily laden carts and to turn treadmills for hours at a time. In a sense, these dogs formed a body of laborers even lower on the social ladder than their masters.

"The most useful conquest achieved by man is the domestication of the dog," declared American author Mrs. R. Lee in 1865, a strange comment by today's standards but reflective of a popular Victorian perception that the only "good" or worthwhile creatures were those that could be induced or forced to serve humanity. Those that did not yield to the will of humankind—such as rogue elephants, untamable horses and even short-tempered monkeys that refused to perform circus tricks—were marked for extermination.

A "peasant" class of dogs bred for specific tasks existed throughout Europe and parts of North America for several centuries, only to vanish as technological innovations and social reforms took hold in the latter part of the 19th century. Such dogs were deemed unworthy of preservation simply because of their affiliation with the lower class, even though these "poor men's horses" became the focal point of the first organized campaigns to end cruelty to animals. These campaigns ultimately became the foundation on which the worldwide humane movement was built.

Poor working canines could be divided into two main classes: treadmill dogs that trotted around and around on enclosed wooden wheels that turned cooking spits, churns or presses; and large, mastifflike canines employed to pull small cargo or passenger wagons. To farmers and merchants of the time, the advantages of owning such dogs seemed obvious. They were cheaper than human slaves or employees, and there were no laws to dictate how they were treated. They reproduced frequently and easily compared to larger types of working beasts. Unlike oxen, mules or horses, dogs could be housed inside their masters' homes and sustained on dinner scraps. They also could perform other duties, such as protecting livestock and warming cold beds.

A Bittersweet Side To The Tragic Lives Of These Little Dogs Can Be Found In A 16th-Century English Account Of How Turnspits Doubled As Foot Warmers During Long Church Services

Throughout the Middle Ages, poultry and joints of meat were routinely roasted over huge, roaring kitchen fires on horizontal, revolving spits. Although the kitchens of the wealthy sometimes hired children to keep the spits turning, most people installed treadmills (wheels) near their hearths and employed one or more dogs for this monotonous and tiring work. The wheels were designed to prevent the dogs from stopping to rest. Most any small dog could be employed o turn these wheels, but in time a special breed was developed, called the Turnspit.

Writing in 1866, George R. Jesse described Turnspits as bluish-gray in color with black spots, and "extremely bandy legged," while earlier accounts such as popular naturalist Thomas Bewick's "History of Quadrupeds" (1790) allude to Turnspits with eyes of differing colors—"the iris of one eye [is] black, and the other 'white.' " Engravings show the Turnspits to have been small in stature, standing about 8 inches at the shoulder, and bearing some resemblance to modern-day Dachshunds (proof that these two breeds are related has never been found, however).

Certainly life as a Turnspit was no bed of roses, since the dogs were forced to run on a wheel for hours at a time with no rest or water breaks, despite the fact that it was widely believed at the time that hydrophobia (rabies) resulted from heat exhaustion and dehydration. Often severely beaten if they resisted this duty, "[the dogs] are enclosed in a wheel from which they cannot escape. . . . If they are lazy [one puts] into the wheel a hot coal as a stimulant to their feet," observed the Rev. Henry Crow in 1822.

A bittersweet side to the tragic lives of these little dogs can be found in a 16th-century English account of how Turnspits doubled as foot warmers during long church services. In the midst of one sermon about the horrors of hell, a minister bellowed, "Fire!" (other accounts say the word was "Spit!"), whereupon a veritable herd of Turnspits stampeded out of the church, evidently mistaking the word for a call to kitchen duty.

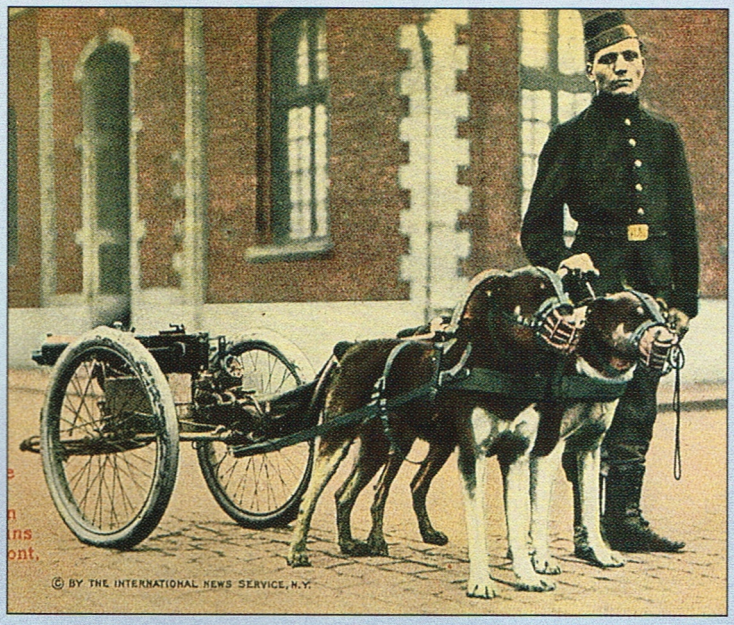
The Rise Of Trekhonds

By contrast, dogs bred and trained to pull wagons were 10 times the size of Turnspits and bore a strong resemblance to modern Mastiffs and Rottweilers. Almost any big dog could be used to pull a wagon, but several distinct cart dog breeds were in common use by the early 1800s, particularly the Belgian Trekhond (or Belgische Rekel). Rather long-legged and lanky in appearance, Trekhonds came in combinations of black, white and tawny brown, with their tails severely docked to prevent them from becoming entangled in harness trappings. At one time their drooping ears also were routinely cropped in the belief that this kept their vision clear, but the practice was later abandoned because rain and snow often caused sores and even deafness.

Trekhonds probably were part of a larger retinue of working breeds (some survive to this day), all of which probably descended from Molossus, huge ancient Roman dogs prized for their aggressive nature and formidable strength. For centuries the descendants of Molossus were the playthings of aristocrats, but by the mid-1700s they were so common that the poorest of farmers and merchants could afford them. It was the working class who in fact exploited them—believing dogs were ideally suited for the grueling work of pulling carts—by retraining and rebreeding these dogs to function as docile beasts of burden.

Throughout the 1800s, the streets of New York, London, Brussels and Amsterdam were clogged with dog carts each Saturday, driven or led by farmers, fishermen, butchers, bakers and merchants who delivered groceries to homes of the wealthy or sifted through curbside heaps of trash for rags to sell to paper makers. "A model of strength and health" was how one turn-of-the-century author described Belgian Trekhonds. "Indeed it is astonishing to see what a disproportionately large load [they] can pull." Reports of three Trekhonds hitched to one 400-pound cartload, running at a steady trot for miles without signs of weariness, were common. Incredibly, some dogs were induced to tow as much as 400 pounds by themselves, without any help from their masters or other animals.

Many Of Them Lived—And Died—On Treadmills And In Harnesses, As Overworked, Underfed Victims Of Abuse And Neglect



A Belgian Carbineer in full regalia stands with a duo of machine gun-toting Trekhonds. This was the type of rig described in "Pierrot: Dog of Belgium," where the dogs remained hitched to the cart while the gun was in use. The postcard, circa 1915, is from the author's collection.

A Revolution In Morals

Perhaps it was inevitable that because of their abundance and affordability, scores of Turnspits and Trekhonds found themselves at the mercy of masters who either were unable, or worse, unwilling, to properly care for them. Many of them lived—and died—on treadmills and in harnesses, as overworked, underfed victims of abuse and neglect. Cruelty was and still is an integral part of any economic system that relies on animals for industrial power and profit. Certainly the lives of many 19th-century, lower-class working dogs were filled with savage whippings, ill-fitting harnesses, excessive burdens and water deprivation. In the case of Turnspits, most acts of cruelty occurred behind closed doors—offstage, so to speak. But cart-dog abuse was an integral part of daily life in 18th- and 19th-century cities—just one of many street scenes, in which animals were flogged, clubbed, burned and even sliced with knives if they tired in the harness. Such spectacles drew little or no reaction from the populace, who found this conduct perfectly acceptable because the going belief was that animals were the exclusive "property" of their masters.

This state of affairs began to change after 1820, however, largely due to two events: the mass-distribution of works by popular writers and artists (such as Lord Byron and Sir Edwin Landseer) who expounded a gentler, more compassionate view of nature, and the emergence of a better-educated, urbanized middle class. In their desire to emulate aristocrats, this upwardly mobile middle class became involved in animal "fancies" (the organized recreational breeding and exhibiting of domesticated creatures). More and more people became involved in loving relationships with canines, often for the first time in their lives, and as a result they also began to recognize the side of dogs that showed unconditional devotion and love. For some people, this realization was nothing short of a revelation, which forever changed the

way they felt about the use of canines as beasts of burden. Before long, the sight of dogs being enslaved and beaten became unacceptable, and there was a groundswell of support for animal welfare advocates. So when Richard Martin ("father" of the English humane movement) spoke before the House of Commons in 1822 in support of a bill to prohibit cruelty to livestock and beasts of burden, he declared it was time for a "revolution in morals."

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals began lobbying Parliament to ban the use of cart dogs, but arguments over the proposed law stretched out over seven years. While Lord Ellenborough believed that lower-income families should be exempt from prosecution, RSPCA supporters such as Lord Brougham countered that "nothing could be more shocking or disgusting than to see the practice of great, heavy men being drawn by dogs. . . . Indeed, [Brougham] had seen, near the place where their Lordships assembled, all sorts of articles drawn by small dogs who could scarcely get on."

The RSPCA added to the debate its concern about the spread of rabies, asserting that "the increase of hydrophobia is attributable to the overheated state of [cart] dogs, prevented as they are from having free access to water, and we have frequently seen these dogs fastened to vehicles panting and foaming with exertion beyond their strength." Over the protestations of cart dog vendors, farmers and merchants, England passed the first Dog Cart Nuisance Law in 1839, prohibiting working draft dogs within 15 miles of London's Charing Cross station.

Lobbying efforts to weaken or reverse the law did not stop, however. RSPCA documents describe how "the costermongers of [London] have got up a petition to Parliament stating that their kindness to their dogs is well known, and that their trade will be knocked up under the New Police Act, as they cannot afford to keep horses." An 1843 *Times* editorial painted a bleak picture of the draft dogs' fate, suggesting that if animal welfare activists had their way, thousands of cart dogs would die: "What is to become of the canine labor which is to be thus suddenly displaced from its legitimate channel? Are out-of-work mastiffs to crowd our crossings and hang disconsolately about the corners of our butchers' shops, like coachmen thrown out of employ by the railroads? Or is the more frightful alternative [of killing cart dogs] to be adopted? Why condemn to dissolute idleness or indiscriminate extinction whole generations of respectable quadrupeds? . . . Will the Thames itself contain the puppies, merged in it under this new stimulus to canine infanticide?"

Despite the alarmist rhetoric, the Dog Cart Nuisance Law was progressively strengthened by amendments that granted the police greater power to apprehend offenders without warrants. Penalties also became increasingly severe, with one abusive merchant being sentenced to a month's "hard labor" in 1841. Finally, on January 1, 1855, Great Britain distinguished itself from the rest of Europe by enacting the first nationwide ban on dog carts. The authors of the bill said they "could not see why dogs in the country should be treated worse than those in the metropolis," and called the sight of dogs straining in harnesses "offensive to humanity."

Abolishing The Use Of Turnspits

Great Britain's ban led the way for restrictive legislation in the United States as well, and after an impassioned argument by American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals President Henry Bergh in 1866, a New York state law requiring all cart dogs to be licensed was passed. It fell short of Bergh's hope for a total ban, but shortly after its passage an observer at the time wrote, "a large collection of carts [were] seen in the City Hall Park with one, two or three lolling, panting, fatigued dogs each, their owners having been arrested either for failure to take out licenses or to muzzle the dogs. A procession of six carts, escorted by a squad of police [was even] seen coming down Fifth Avenue."

Inspired by his success with the cart dog issue, Bergh continued to campaign for the humane treatment of working dogs, and was particularly interested in abolishing the use of treadmill dogs. He saw one such dog slaving away on a cider press in the window of a New York City saloon in 1874. "The underside of [its] collar had chafed a raw sore . . . he panted and frequently tried to stop, but was so tied that he had to keep on running or choke." Bergh arrested the proprietor, who took his case to the Supreme Court and lost (the man was fined $25). Bergh was famous for storming into such establishments and shouting down the proprietors when they tried to defend their actions. "They could not see how it was any of [Bergh's] business how they worked their cider mill. What was a dog good for anyhow if he wasn't put to something? Was he only fit to be patted on his head?" (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals documents.)

On at least two occasions, Bergh revisited New York business establishments convicted of Turnspit abuse, only to find the dogs replaced with African-American children. Some merchants employed "Turnspit children" as a way of avoiding Bergh's inspections; wages were low or nonexistent and hazardous work conditions resulted in many children becoming permanently maimed. Only 10 years earlier African slaves had been employed to turn treadmills and sugar cane presses to the point of exhaustion throughout much of the United States. To see the ease with which dogs and children could be interchanged for this dangerous work incensed and saddened many, including Bergh, who had long since concluded that the forced employment of dogs was simply another form of slavery.

Cart Dogs On The Continent

Despite the enactment of anti-cruelty laws in America and England, advocates objected to the continued use of draft dogs in Germany, Belgium, Holland and France. The RSPCA issued an official statement around 1870 endorsing the abolition of "dog traction" in Belgium. In 1886 the ASPCA sent a letter to Belgium's Société Royal Protectrice des Animaux, pointing out that "the dog is not adapted by nature for use as a beast of burden." Efforts to pass a total ban on cart dogs in these countries were unsuccessful, but a large body of regulations, inspections and licensing fees was soon established to regulate and protect working dogs.

A 1910 Belgian decree banished dog carts, but it was so full of loopholes and exemptions for elderly or infirm people, and those whose livelihoods depended on Trekhonds, that thousands of citizens were still able to employ dogs. By law, cart dogs were entitled to regular rest periods, and wagons had to meet strict design and safety guidelines. Belgian police set up roadside checkpoints to inspect cargo weight, cart equipment and harness trappings, and they could issue tickets for the slightest violation. Substantial licensing fees, combined with an intimidating bureaucracy, further discouraged the use of cart dogs. But they continued to serve as a popular mode of transport for Flemish dairymen until World War I, an event that would have a profound impact on all kinds of dogs as well as people.

Pierrot Goes To War

As the Germans invaded Belgium, Trekhonds were pressed into service by families trying to flee with their elderly relations, children and possessions. The suspension of Belgium's 1910 decree freed the way for the military to confiscate every able-bodied cart dog. These

animals were used to pull machine guns, small cannons, ammunition, mess wagons and mini-ambulances. "They take weapons right up to the firing line without a sign of fear and lie down in the midst of shot and shell," gushed Kate Sanborn in "Educated Dogs of Today" (1916). Sanborn apparently was unaware that many Trekhond duos were abandoned in the line of fire, trapped by their harnesses when the carts became stuck in seas of mud. Other times the handler was killed as well as one of the two canines, leaving the surviving dog to the mercy of the enemy, or whole platoons of Trekhonds were machine-gunned within minutes of being called into action.

Walter A. Dyer's fictional account of one Trekhond, "Pierrot: Dog of Belgium" (1915), contains a riveting description of what it was like at the front for many of these dogs: "They were turned about and obliged to stand facing away from the tumult of battle as the machine guns began to rattle directly behind them. Two of the dogs started wildly off, their guns bumping and careening behind them. Other dogs reared and snarled, and it was all the men could do to prevent a stampede. A speeding bullet caught one spotted young dog [as he trotted] close by his mate, and he fell dead at Pierrot's feet. The carbineers were soon overwhelmed [by Germans] and dogs who were harnessed were quickly bayoneted that they might not escape with the guns."

Last Years Of The Working Dogs

The advance of the Industrial Revolution introduced motor-driven kitchen appliances and mass-produced automobiles to even the poorest of households, and it certainly played a role in the demise of Turnspits and Trekhonds. A mechanized clockwork roasting jack invented around 1870 was eagerly accepted by cooks, who abandoned their Turnspits for the novel convenience.

The few Trekhonds that survived the horror of World War I were put to work back home pulling carts for impoverished war widows, then faded from daily life as they were replaced by trucks and cars. Belgium's National Federation for the Breeding of Draft Dogs, which only decades earlier honored breeders who carefully maintained Trekhond lineages (some of which stretched back more than 200 years), was disbanded by war's end, its records apparently destroyed and forever lost. No documentation has been found to suggest that any organized attempt was made to perpetuate the Trekhond after 1920.

Mechanized wheels were not alone responsible for the end of these dogs, since animal welfare advocates, dog fanciers and writers contributed to their extinction as well, though this was more by default than deliberate intent. Humane organizations that once championed these dogs and their right to a quality life turned their attention to more pressing issues as the animals were made obsolete by technological innovations. Advocates celebrated the end of such exploitation, but either did not care or did not foresee that these breeds would vanish when there was no longer any demand for their services.

If the humane movement is partly to blame for the extinction of these canines, so too is the dog fancy, which could have given these breeds refuge in the show world. Imposing human concepts of social status and hierarchy on the dog world leaves little room for animals commonly associated with the "masses," however. There was little sympathy for the plight of poor working people, especially foreigners, whose troubles were attributed to their lack of "breeding." Pedigreed dog enthusiasts showed nothing but contempt for Turnspits and Trekhonds, which because of their affiliation with the lower class were dismissed as "ill-bred." While breeders boasted of the "noble nature" of spaniels and retrievers (traditionally kept by the aristocracy), they heartlessly described Turnspits

as "ill-made hounds" whose very existence was proof that "the perpetuation of malformation in several breeds will produce a Turnspit."

Some 19th- and early 20th-century dog shows went so far as to lump "working" breeds into an exhibition class with "dogs owned by foreigners." Not surprisingly, these entries never won any top prizes. Trekhonds and Turnspits were not even mentioned on the list of breeds eligible for shows. Even if they had been, their exhibitors would have quickly become discouraged by the biased tone of such elitist events.

The extinction of Turnspits and Trekhonds as the 20th century progressed was scarcely noticed by most social observers of the time. Small clusters of Turnspits survived in remote parts of Wales into this century, as did Trekhonds in isolated parts of Belgium and France. But they have since vanished, reabsorbed into a vast canine "melting pot" of other breeds. Today, a lone female Turnspit named Whiskey stands on display in the Castle Museum in Abergavenny, Wales, a mute witness to the days when these little dogs occupied virtually every kitchen and church in the land. All that remains of the Trekhonds are a few carts in museums, and photo-postcards once sold to tourists, who mistook dog carts for just one more quaint vignette of European rural life.

A troupe of Trekhonds did accompany the king of Belgium to the United States in 1919 to participate in a parade celebrating the liberation of his country, and among the beasts cast in bronze in 1934 in Brussels as a tribute to the Belgian Infantry is a Trekhond, harnessed and ready for combat.

The Debate Goes On

In recent years a growing number of fanciers are honoring the positive aspects of man and dog working side by side, for as these living history buffs point out, smart merchants and farmers have always known that animals willingly work when they are well fed and treated kindly. Using Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs, Newfoundlands and other breeds with a penchant for pulling, fanciers turn out for parades in traditional costumes, their dogs harnessed to restored antique carts decorated with ribbons and flowers. Tentative efforts are even under way to recreate the Belgische Rekel by combining other, similar-looking and behaving breeds.

Meanwhile, research laboratories, race tracks, kennel clubs, breeders and humane organizations are revisiting the debate over mankind's "right" to exploit animals capable of feeling joy and pain. While arguments for and against the rights of dogs continue to mimic those expressed more than a century ago, only as the 20th century draws to a close are we, the "human animal," finally beginning to fully grasp the need for a compassionate ethic that encompasses creatures other than ourselves. Canines continue to play conflicting roles in our culture—roles that in many ways are similar to those that existed more than a century ago, with some dogs treated as cherished family members while others are exploited as "property."

The lesson to be found in the story of the Turnspits and Trekhonds is that how we treat such animals is a reflection of how we treat each other. It serves as a kind of barometer of the very character of our society at a given time in history—a description of how "civilized" we were then. To see our past in this light is to shed new light on today; it offers us a chance to take a fresh look at the present and the opportunity to transcend the class system we humans continue to impose on the world of dogs.

Anthropologist Mary Thurston's first book, "The Lost History of the Canine Race," is slated for publication in the fall by Andrews and McMeel Publishing Co.